



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE
QUICK NOTES
THIRD REGULAR SESSION, 19TH CONGRESS

Public Hearing of the Committee on Basic Education

Chairperson: Sen. Win Gatchalian

30 April 2025, Wednesday, 10:00 a.m., Sen. Laurel Room, Senate

Re: Initial Results of the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS)

Background

- The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) conducted the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) from September 30 to October 22, 2024. This nationwide survey, the seventh in its series since 1989, aimed to provide updated and comprehensive data on literacy, education, and media exposure among Filipinos.¹
- The 2024 FLEMMS sought to: a) Estimate the proportion of the population aged 5 and over who are basically literate; b) Determine the proportion of individuals aged 10 to 64 who are functionally literate, along with their socio-economic characteristics; c) Assess the educational qualifications of the population in terms of formal schooling; d) Evaluate the mass media exposure of the population; and, e) Pilot-test new data items aligned with the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), endorsed by UNESCO, to measure functional literacy more accurately.²

Highlights

- While the comprehensive results are pending, preliminary reports have highlighted several key findings, such as:
 - **Functional Literacy Rate:** Approximately 70.8% of Filipinos aged 10 to 64 are functionally literate, meaning they can read, write, and comprehend written materials. This indicates a significant gap between basic literacy (over 90%) and functional literacy, with about three in ten Filipinos struggling to understand what they read.³

¹ [PSA-La Union sets to conduct Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey | Philippine Statistics Authority | Region I](#)

² Ibid.

³ [Functional literacy low in regions with high poverty — PSA data | Philstar.com](#)

- **Regional Disparities:** Regions with higher poverty incidences tend to have lower functional literacy rates. This correlation underscores the impact of economic hardship on access to quality education and literacy outcomes.⁴
- **Media Exposure and Literacy:** Exposure to various forms of mass media, such as television and the internet, is associated with higher functional literacy rates. This suggests that media consumption can play a role in enhancing literacy skills.⁵

Possible Points for Discussion

- FLEMMS, a national household survey, assessed literacy skills based on self-reports (either from the respondent or another household member) across a broad age range (10–64 years). In contrast, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international standardized test, directly evaluates specific academic competencies of 15-year-old students. How reliable is the FLEMMS methodology in accurately capturing literacy levels compared to direct assessment tools like PISA?
- What factors contribute to the significant differences observed between the FLEMMS and PISA literacy outcomes?
- What targeted strategies can be implemented to strengthen functional literacy across different regions and age groups in the Philippines?
- As technology becomes increasingly integral to education, how can digital tools and platforms be leveraged to enhance literacy and learning outcomes in the Philippines?
- Literacy today extends beyond reading and writing to include digital, media, and information literacy. How can functional literacy be redefined and measured more comprehensively to reflect the critical skills needed in a digitally-driven 21st century?

⁴ [Functional literacy low in regions with high poverty — PSA data | Philstar.com](#)

⁵ [PIDS - Philippine Institute for Development Studies](#)