

# SPECIAL RELEASE

## Literacy Rate and Educational Attainment Among Persons Five Years Old and Over in the Philippines (2020 Census of Population and Housing)

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### Literacy rate in the Philippines improves to 97.0 percent

1. Based on the 2020 Census of Population and Housing (2020 CPH), of the 97,600,336 household population five years old and over, 94,627,566 persons (97.0%) were literate. This translates to a 1.2 percentage point improvement from the 85,953,030 persons (95.8%) that was recorded in 2015. (Figure 1)
2. In the 2020 CPH and 2015 Census of Population (2015 POPCEN), a person is considered literate if he/she is able to read and write a simple message in any language or dialect.
3. Literacy rate in 2020 was slightly higher among females (97.1%) than among males (96.8%). The same trend was observed in 2015. (Figure 1)

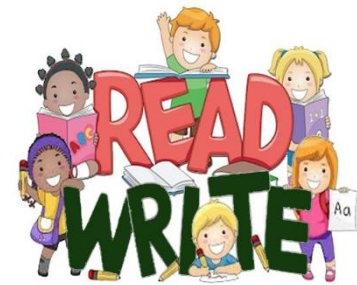


Figure 1. Literacy Rate of the Household Population Five Years Old and Over by Sex: Philippines, 2020 and 2015

Census Year	Sex	Literacy Rate (percent)
2020	Both sexes	97.0
	Male	96.8
	Female	97.1
2015	Both sexes	95.8
	Male	95.6
	Female	95.9

Sources: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing and 2015 Census of Population

## Literacy rate is highest in the National Capital Region

4. Among the 17 administrative regions, the National Capital Region (NCR) posted the highest literacy rate at 98.9 percent. Aside from the NCR, seven other regions had a literacy rate higher than the national rate (97.0%), namely: Region I – Ilocos Region (98.6%), Region IV-A CALABARZON (98.5%), Region III – Central Luzon (98.3%), Region II – Cagayan Valley (98.0%), Region VI – Western Visayas (97.7%), Region V – Bicol Region (97.4%), and Region VII – Central Visayas (97.1%). Meanwhile, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) had the lowest literacy rate at 86.4 percent. (Table 1)

Table 1. Literacy Rate of the Household Population Five Years Old and Over by Sex and Region: Philippines, 2020

Region	Literate			Percent		
	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Philippines	94,627,566	47,734,663	46,892,903	97.0	96.8	97.1
National Capital Region (NCR)	11,987,876	5,942,387	6,045,489	98.9	98.8	98.9
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	1,568,486	803,247	765,239	96.1	96.1	96.0
I - Ilocos Region	4,745,653	2,397,277	2,348,376	98.6	98.6	98.7
II - Cagayan Valley	3,280,633	1,667,569	1,613,064	98.0	97.9	98.1
III - Central Luzon	11,011,196	5,557,718	5,453,478	98.3	98.2	98.4
IV-A - CALABARZON	14,363,014	7,193,174	7,169,840	98.5	98.4	98.6
MIMAROPA Region	2,752,559	1,400,088	1,352,471	95.6	95.4	95.7
V - Bicol Region	5,250,758	2,651,885	2,598,873	97.4	97.2	97.7
VI - Western Visayas	7,007,927	3,546,978	3,460,949	97.7	97.5	97.9
VII - Central Visayas	7,020,558	3,544,186	3,476,372	97.1	96.9	97.4
VIII - Eastern Visayas	3,870,740	1,968,411	1,902,329	95.4	94.8	96.1
IX - Zamboanga Peninsula	3,228,568	1,641,158	1,587,410	94.0	93.9	94.0
X - Northern Mindanao	4,283,921	2,177,949	2,105,972	96.0	95.8	96.2
XI - Davao Region	4,531,471	2,319,389	2,212,082	96.8	96.7	96.9
XII - SOCCSKSARGEN	3,676,378	1,877,818	1,798,560	94.7	94.7	94.7
XIII - Caraga	2,420,086	1,237,635	1,182,451	96.4	96.2	96.6
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)	3,627,742	1,807,794	1,819,948	86.4	86.2	86.6

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

## More females than males attain higher levels of education

5. In the 2020 CPH, the highest educational attainment was asked for all persons aged five years and over. The census revealed that 38.6 percent had reached or completed at most high school or secondary level (graduate: 21.7%; undergraduate: 16.8%), 29.5 percent had reached or completed at most elementary level (graduate: 9.5%; undergraduate: 20.0%), and 23.4 percent had reached or completed at most college level (graduate: 13.5%; undergraduate: 10.0%). Meanwhile, 0.3 percent had reached or completed post baccalaureate level. (Table 2 and Figure 2)

6. There were more females (25.6%) than males (21.3%) among those with college or academic degrees. Similarly, more females (0.4%) than males (0.3%) had completed post baccalaureate courses. (Table 2)

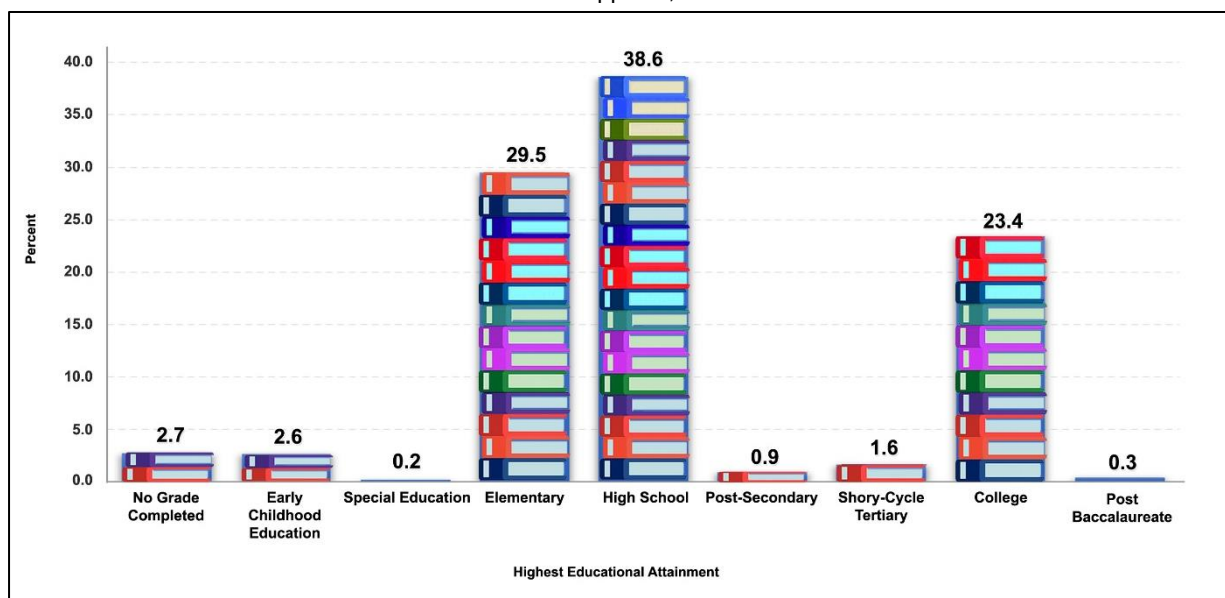
Table 2. Household Population Five Years Old and Over by Highest Educational Attainment and Sex: Philippines, 2020

Highest Educational Attainment	Both Sexes		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	97,600,336	100.0	49,304,826	100.0	48,295,510	100.0
No Grade Completed	2,602,420	2.7	1,356,078	2.8	1,246,342	2.6
Early Childhood Education	2,519,908	2.6	1,321,204	2.7	1,198,704	2.5
Elementary	28,806,239	29.5	15,465,383	31.4	13,340,856	27.6
Undergraduate	19,500,675	20.0	10,680,117	21.7	8,820,558	18.3
Graduate	9,253,373	9.5	4,754,446	9.6	4,498,927	9.3
Special Needs Education (SPED)/ Second-Chance Education	52,191	0.1	30,820	0.1	21,371	0.0
High School	37,678,856	38.6	18,994,493	38.5	18,684,363	38.7
Undergraduate	16,432,432	16.8	8,492,943	17.2	7,939,489	16.4
Graduate	21,151,909	21.7	10,450,115	21.2	10,701,794	22.2
Special Needs Education (SPED)/ Second-Chance Education	94,515	0.1	51,435	0.1	43,080	0.1
Post-Secondary	846,131	0.9	521,840	1.1	324,291	0.7
Undergraduate	59,272	0.1	34,670	0.1	24,602	0.1
Graduate	786,859	0.8	487,170	1.0	299,689	0.6
Short-Cycle Tertiary	1,548,974	1.6	806,677	1.6	742,297	1.5
Undergraduate	36,353	0.0	20,485	0.0	15,868	0.0
Graduate	1,512,621	1.5	786,192	1.6	726,429	1.5
College	22,870,213	23.4	10,496,991	21.3	12,373,222	25.6
Undergraduate	9,742,196	10.0	4,748,297	9.6	4,993,899	10.3
Graduate	13,128,017	13.5	5,748,694	11.7	7,379,323	15.3
Post Baccalaureate	327,063	0.3	125,347	0.3	201,716	0.4
Undergraduate	47,247	0.0	17,091	0.0	30,156	0.1
Graduate	279,816	0.3	108,256	0.2	171,560	0.4
Not Reported	400,532	0.4	216,813	0.4	183,719	0.4

Note: Total proportion may not add up to 100.0 percent due to rounding off.

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 2. Proportion of Household Population Five Years Old and Over by Highest Educational Attainment: Philippines, 2020



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

### About two in every three children aged 5 to 9 years has elementary education under the K to 12 Curriculum

7. Nearly two-thirds (65.6%) of the 11,266,823 children aged 5 to 9 years had reached or completed at most elementary education under the K to 12 Curriculum; 21.9 percent had reached or completed at most Early Childhood Education; and 11.5 percent had no grade completed. (Table 3)
8. On the other hand, about three-fifths (58.3%) of the 11,080,715 children aged 10 to 14 years had reached or completed at most elementary education under the K to 12 Curriculum, while 40.1 percent had reached Junior High School (JHS) which is composed of Grades 7 to 10 under the new K to 12 Curriculum. (Table 3)
9. Moreover, 49.3 percent of the 10,459,186 household population aged 15 to 19 years had reached or completed at least JHS while 29.1 percent reached or completed at most Senior High School (SHS). (Table 3)
10. Of the household population aged 20 to 24 years, 47.3 percent had reached or completed at most college education. (Table 3)

Table 3. Household Population Five Years Old and Over by Highest Educational Attainment and Age Group: Philippines, 2020

Highest Educational Attainment	Age Group (in years)					
	Total		5-9		10-14	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	97,600,336	100.0	11,266,823	100.0	11,080,715	100.0
No Grade Completed	2,602,420	2.7	1,299,759	11.5	99,485	0.9
Early Childhood Education	2,519,908	2.6	2,472,760	21.9	21,371	0.2
Special Needs Education (SPED)/ Second-Chance Education	146,706	0.2	-	-	15,653	0.1
Old Curriculum						
Elementary	14,244,792	14.6	-	-	2,590	0.0
High School	23,857,805	24.4	-	-	-	-
K to 12 Program						
Grade 1 to 6	14,509,256	14.9	7,394,791	65.6	6,459,540	58.3
Junior High School	10,054,271	10.3	-	-	4,440,151	40.1
Senior High School	3,672,265	3.8	-	-	-	-
Post-Secondary	846,131	0.9	-	-	-	-
Short-Cycle Tertiary	1,548,974	1.6	-	-	-	-
College	22,870,213	23.4	-	-	-	-
Undergraduate	9,742,196	10.0	-	-	-	-
Graduate	13,128,017	13.5	-	-	-	-
Post Baccalaureate	327,063	0.3	-	-	-	-
Not Reported	400,532	0.4	99,513	0.9	41,925	0.4

Highest Educational Attainment	Age Group (in years)					
	15-19		20-24		25 and over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	10,459,186	100.0	9,969,846	100.0	54,823,766	100.0
No Grade Completed	89,786	0.9	94,884	1.0	1,018,506	1.9
Early Childhood Education	7,342	0.1	3,161	0.0	15,274	0.0
Special Needs Education (SPED)/ Second-Chance Education	27,885	0.3	40,900	0.4	62,268	0.1
Old Curriculum						
Elementary	177,068	1.7	942,263	9.5	13,122,871	23.9
High School	73,884	0.7	2,693,236	27.0	21,090,685	38.5
K to 12 Program						
Grade 1 to 6	587,418	5.6	67,507	0.7	-	-
Junior High School	5,161,454	49.3	452,666	4.5	-	-
Senior High School	3,038,807	29.1	633,458	6.4	-	-
Post-Secondary	13,659	0.1	106,133	1.1	726,339	1.3
Short-Cycle Tertiary	12,847	0.1	171,385	1.7	1,364,742	2.5
College	1,201,733	11.5	4,714,393	47.3	16,954,087	30.9
Undergraduate	1,183,452	11.3	2,419,000	24.3	6,139,744	11.2
Graduate	18,281	0.2	2,295,393	23.0	10,814,343	19.7
Post Baccalaureate	-	-	11,919	0.1	315,144	0.6
Not Reported	67,303	0.6	37,941	0.4	153,850	0.3

Note: Details may not add up to 100.0 percent due to rounding off and due to values smaller than 0.0 percent.  
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

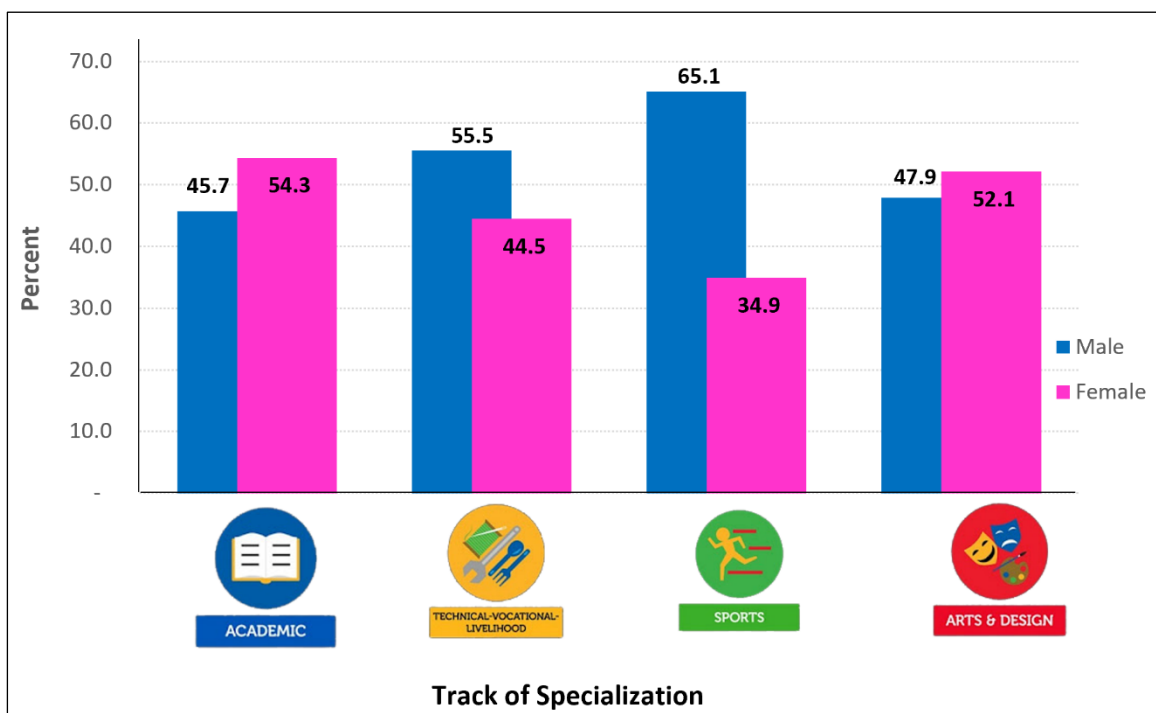
## Academic track is the most preferred field of specialization among females who reached or completed at most Senior High School

- Senior High School (SHS) in the Philippines, under the new K to 12 Curriculum is composed of two years (Grades 11 and 12) of specialized upper secondary education. Under this program,

students may choose a specialization among the four career tracks, namely: Academic; Arts and Design; Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL); and Sports.

12. Of the 37,678,856 household population aged five years and over who had reached or completed at most high school education, 3,672,265 persons (9.7%) had reached or completed at most SHS under the K to 12 Curriculum while 10,054,271 persons (26.7%) had reached or completed at most JHS under the K to 12 Curriculum. On the other hand, 23,857,805 persons (63.3%) had reached or completed at most high school under the Old Curriculum.
13. Moreover, approximately two in every three (66.4%) of the 3,672,265 household population aged five years and over who had reached or completed at most SHS had chosen Academic Track; 28.5 percent had chosen TVL Track; 0.2 percent had chosen Arts and Design Track, while 0.1 percent had chosen Sports Track.
14. Among the 2,439,091 students who had chosen the Academic Track, 54.3 percent were females while 45.7 percent were males. There were also more females (52.1%) than males (47.9%) who took up the Arts and Design Track. On the other hand, more males (55.5%) than females (44.5%) chose TVL Track, as well as the Sports Track (65.1% for males and 34.9% for females). (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Proportion of Senior High School Students by Track of Specialization and Sex: Philippines, 2020

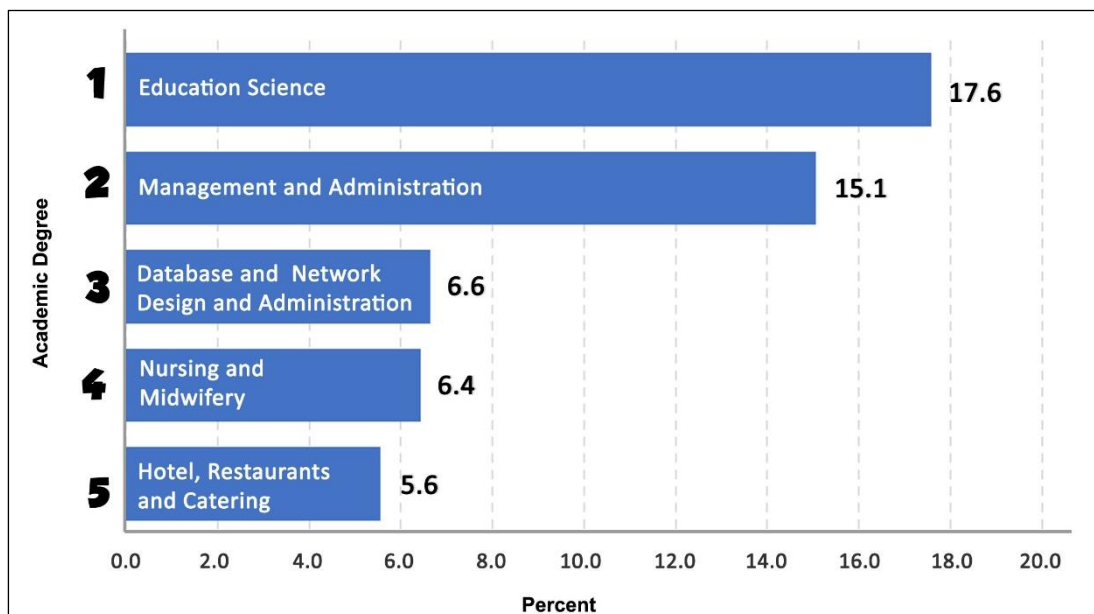


Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

## About one in every six college graduates has a degree in Education Science

15. There were 13,128,017 graduates of college based on the 2020 CPH. The top five most popular courses among college graduates were: Education Science (17.6% of college graduates); Management and Administration (15.1%); Database and Network Design and Administration (6.6%); Nursing and Midwifery (6.4%); Hotel, Restaurants, and Catering (5.6%). (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Top Five Most Popular Academic Degrees Among College Graduates: Philippines, 2020



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

## Males prefer Management and Administration courses; females opt for Education Science courses

16. The three most popular courses attended or completed by the 5,748,694 male academic degree holders were: Management and Administration (11.9%); Education Science (8.7%); and Database and Network Design and Administration (8.6%). (Table 4)
17. On the other hand, among the 7,379,323 female college graduates, the three most popular academic degrees courses were: Education Science (24.5%); Management and Administration (17.5%); and Nursing and Midwifery (8.7%). (Table 4)

Table 4. Top Ten Most Popular Academic Degrees Among College Graduates:  
Philippines, 2020

Academic Degree	Both Sexes		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	13,128,017		5,748,694		7,379,323	
Education Science	2,309,119	17.6	498,777	8.7	1,810,342	24.5
Management and administration	1,976,335	15.1	682,042	11.9	1,294,293	17.5
Database and network design and administration	872,737	6.6	496,663	8.6	376,074	5.1
Nursing and midwifery	844,465	6.4	201,564	3.5	642,901	8.7
Hotel restaurants and catering	728,833	5.6	294,050	5.1	434,783	5.9
Accounting and taxation	711,037	5.4	211,742	3.7	499,295	6.8
Sociology and cultural studies	511,862	3.9	391,978	6.8	119,884	1.6
Software and applications development and analysis	502,673	3.8	220,653	3.8	282,020	3.8
Building and civil engineering	494,907	3.8	348,750	6.1	146,157	2.0
Transport services	428,009	3.3	412,214	7.2	15,795	0.2

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

### More females than males pursue post baccalaureate education

18. Among the 327,063 persons who had reached or completed at most post baccalaureate level of education (master's and doctorate degrees), more than three in every five (61.7% or 201,716) were females while 125,347 (38.3%) were males. (Table 5)
19. Education Science was the most common field among those who pursued post baccalaureate degrees, comprising 17.4 percent or 56,961 persons. It was followed by Medicine (16.8% or 54,950) and Management and Administration (11.2% or 36,773). (Table 5)
20. The most common post baccalaureate course among females was Education Science comprising 20.6 percent. On the other hand, the most common post baccalaureate course among males was Medicine comprising 18.2 percent. (Table 5)



Table 5. Top Ten Most Popular Post Baccalaureate Course:  
Philippines, 2020

Academic Degree	Both Sexes		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	327,063		125,347		201,716	
Education Science	56,961	17.4	15,333	12.2	41,628	20.6
Medicine	54,950	16.8	22,864	18.2	32,086	15.9
Management and administration	36,773	11.2	16,269	13.0	20,504	10.2
Dental studies	27,951	8.5	8,463	6.8	19,488	9.7
Teacher training with subject specialization	10,667	3.3	3,351	2.7	7,316	3.6
Law	9,220	2.8	5,191	4.1	4,029	2.0
Teacher training without subject specialization	6,807	2.1	2,138	1.7	4,669	2.3
Philosophy and ethics	6,289	1.9	2,978	2.4	3,311	1.6
Inter-disciplinary programs and qualifications involving education	4,825	1.5	1,587	1.3	3,238	1.6
Veterinary	4,807	1.5	2,696	2.2	2,111	1.0

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing

The statistics presented in this Special Release were based on the information provided by the respondent or any responsible household member who provided answers to the questions and gave information about all the household members.

For the 2020 CPH, literacy and highest grade/year completed data of household members five years and over were collected by asking the respondents, “Can \_\_\_ read and write a simple message in any language or dialect?” and “What is the highest grade/year completed by \_\_\_?”

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