

# The Effects of Reading Engagement, Family and Academic Background on Reading Literacy Performance: A Study of Learning Characteristics of the Academic Resilient and Advantaged Low-Achievers

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Many students from social and economic disadvantaged homes participating in PISA 2009 were classified as academic resilient (called *disadvantaged high-achiever*, the DHA in the present study). They were able to beat the odds against them so as to advance in reading literacy attainment. In addition, in comparison with peers of comparable home background status, there were students from advantaged homes performing far behind standard in reading literacy performance (i.e. the *advantaged low-achiever*, the ALA in the present study). Drawing on data from the PISA 2009 reading literacy study, this study sought to examine the similarities and differences in the learning characteristics (i.e. family and academic background, and reading engagement variables) among the Macao students. These students were classified as DHA or ALA with reference to their disadvantaged or advantaged counterparts respectively. The results of the logistic regression analyses showed that variables like family and academic background, as well as reading engagement are able to predict whether a student of comparable disadvantaged (or advantaged) home background is more likely to be classified as DHA (or ALA) or not. Specifically, gender, grade repetition, school transfer, years of kindergarten attendance, enjoyment of reading activities, metacognitive awareness of summarizing strategy, as well as metacognitive awareness of understanding and remembering strategies, are significant predicting variables explaining in what respects students are classified as DHAs or ALAs relative to the reference groups of comparable home background status. The findings are important to shed light on the principles and methods of reading instruction so as to help the low-achievers, whether advantaged or disadvantaged, to advance to higher level of academic attainment.

Keywords: academic resilience, social economic status, reading engagement, PISA