

Study: Regional differences in the educational outcomes of young immigrants

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, November 18, 2015

The reading and math skills of 15-year-old immigrant students, as measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) between 2000 and 2012, vary across regions of Canada.

Regional variations were also observed in the high school and university completion rates of youth who immigrated to Canada before the age of 15, as measured in 2011.

The findings are included in a new article released today, titled "[Regional differences in the educational outcomes of young immigrants](#)."

In the article, comparisons are drawn among immigrant youth residing in different regions of Canada, as well as between immigrant youth and the children of Canadian-born parents (also called third- or higher-generation individuals) within regions.

The math and reading skills of immigrants vary across regions

The average math PISA scores of immigrant students aged 15 ranged from 554 in British Columbia to 494 in the combined region of Manitoba and Saskatchewan—a difference of 60 points.

Among third- or higher-generation children, the highest average score was in Quebec (545) and the lowest was in the Atlantic provinces (505), a difference of 40 points.

In some regions, such as British Columbia and the Atlantic provinces, immigrants had significantly higher PISA math scores than third- or higher-generation children.

In contrast, in Quebec and the combined region of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, immigrants had significantly lower average PISA math scores than their third- or higher-generation counterparts.

The reading PISA scores of immigrants aged 15 also varied across regions, and were lower than third- or higher-generation children in almost every region. However, the lower reading scores of immigrant students partly reflected the fact that the mother tongue of many was neither English nor French.

University completion rates higher among immigrants

In every region, youth who immigrated before the age of 15 had high school and university completion rates that were higher than those of third- or higher-generation individuals.

In Canada as a whole, 40% of immigrants aged 25 to 29 had a university degree in 2011, compared with 26% among third- or higher-generation individuals in the same age group.

Regionally, British Columbia (44%) had the highest proportion of immigrants aged 25 to 29 with a university degree in 2011, followed by Ontario (41%). The university completion rates of immigrants were lower in the combined region of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (29%) as well as in Quebec (32%).

The university completion rates of third- or higher-generation individuals ranged from 28% in Ontario to 21% in British Columbia and Alberta.

The background characteristics of immigrants, such as their country of origin, explained some—but not all—of the interregional differences in university and high school completion rates.

Regional patterns in the educational outcomes of children born in Canada to immigrant parents (also called second-generation individuals) were similar to those of third- or higher-generation children.



Note to readers

Through its triennial survey of 15-year-old students around the world, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Assessment (PISA) assesses the extent to which students near the end of compulsory education have acquired key knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern society.

In this study, reading scores from the 2000 and 2009 PISA and math scores from the 2003 and 2012 PISA were combined to examine regional differences in the average scores of immigrants (who immigrated to Canada before the age of 15).

The study provides comparisons among children of Canadian-born parents, also called third- or higher-generation Canadians. The regional results of second-generation children (children with one or two immigrant parents) were similar to those of third- or higher-generation children; therefore, the results for this specific population are not shown.

Because of sample size issues, the Atlantic provinces were combined into one region, as were Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The other regions examined were Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

The study also examined the high school completion rates of immigrants aged 20 to 24 who immigrated in their childhood (namely before the age of 15) and university completion rates among those aged 25 to 29, based on data from the 2011 National Household Survey.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 5060 and 5178.

The article "[Regional differences in the educational outcomes of young immigrants](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* (75-006-X) from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, under *Publications*.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, or for more information on *Insights on Canadian Society*, contact Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-0803; sebastien.larochelle-cote@canada.ca), Labour Statistics Division.