

An Analysis of Intergenerational Transmission of Education among Hispanic Americans

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Hispanic Americans now constitute the largest minority group in the United States understanding the sources of their socioeconomic status is important for providing a more accurate appraisal of racial/ethnic inequality. It is reported on the average Hispanic Americans have the lowest educational level among racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. For example, according to the U.S. Census, 58% of Asians have a bachelor's degree or higher, followed by non-Hispanic Whites (40%) and Blacks (26%). Only 19% of Hispanics have a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, among Hispanics, foreign-born Hispanics demonstrate a lower educational level than native-born Hispanics. 20% of native-born Hispanics have a college degree compared to 12% of foreign-born Hispanics in 2015.

As education has become all but vital for social mobility and long-term economic success, low educational attainment has become a barrier to the social and economic advancement of many Hispanic Americans. In general, education provides immigrant children with the opportunity to advance their economic success as adults as well as a means to foster assimilation. Previous studies have suggested that educational attainment is heavily influenced by family background, including parental educational level, family economic resources, and family structure, number of siblings, also parental involvement and styles. Many studies have also emphasized the importance of neighbourhood quality as a factor affecting children's educational attainments.

In regards to the educational attainments of children from immigrant families, prior studies have suggested that children of immigrants usually outperform first generation immigrants and children of native-born Americans. Net of parental socioeconomic status, children from immigrant families also tend perform better academically than children of US-born parents of an equivalent racial, ethnic, or national background. This phenomenon is usually termed by social scientists as "immigrant optimism" and as one of the "immigrant paradoxes". Evidence also indicates that intergenerational educational mobility is usually high among children of immigrants. Children of Latin American immigrants, however, seem more likely to be of a low socioeconomic status as they demonstrate a low level of upward mobility and therefore may

be an exception to the "immigrant optimism" thesis. Despite the fact that the educational attainment among Hispanics has been rising steadily in recent years. Hispanic Americans have lower-than-average educational attainment. This low educational attainment has stalled Hispanic Americans' socioeconomic advancement. Hispanics thus constitute an important case that needs further elucidation, especially with reference to understanding their parental transmission of educational attainment, immigration status, and community contexts.

Extensive prior research has suggested that educational attainments aren't only determined by parental socioeconomic factors, but also by the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the places where they were raised. Although the magnitude of the effect of neighbourhood characteristics on education is debatable, many researchers investigating immigration assimilation suggest that neighbourhood quality is particularly important for socioeconomic outcomes among children from immigrant families. Social context is a major factor that influences assimilation, and contextual socioeconomic characteristics plays a main role in immigrant assimilation and upward mobility. Children's development is not only suffering from what's happening "inside the family", but also what's happening "outside the family" found that neighbourhood quality significantly affects educational attainment of children with low-educated parents. Thus, there could be an interactive relationship between parental education and contextual characteristics that influences native-born Hispanic American's educational attainment.

Intergenerational transmission of education from parents to children may vary consistent with the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the neighbourhood where the child was raised. There are three alternative ways in which contextual level characteristics can affect how the educational level of Hispanic American parents is transmitted to their children. First, Hispanic children who grew up in an area with a high level of socioeconomic capital might demonstrate higher educational attainment. If this is often the case, then contextual capital would positively affect Hispanic children's education. Second, contextual level capital might decrease Hispanic children's educational

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attainment, especially if a child feels disadvantaged within the community and therefore the environment hinders the child's development. Lastly, contextual level capital might not influence intergenerational transmission of education among Hispanics.

The Hispanic population demonstrates a high level of heterogeneity in terms of generational status. Each generation features a different

socioeconomic circumstance and assimilation level. The study contributes to the literature on Hispanics' educational mobility and assimilation in order to better understand the dynamics of immigrant assimilation, which may lead to better strategies for helping children of immigrants, achieve greater success in their educational attainments and labour market outcomes.