

Socioeconomic Consequences of not Completing High School: An Analysis of Statistics Canada Data

KEYWORDS

early school leaving, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, Indigenous persons

RESEARCH SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION

This Statistics Canada study examined the economic outcomes of young men and women, aged 25 to 34, based on the following four levels of educational attainment:

1. No high school diploma;
2. High school diploma;
3. Collegiate/trade school diploma;
4. University diploma.

To determine the outcomes the author looked at over 10 different variables related to socioeconomic status, three of which are summarized in this research summary. They are: 1) prevalence of single-parent households, 2) median income, and 3) rates of youth neither in education, employment, nor training (NEET).

The analysis of these variables showed significant differences across gender and educational attainment. Women who had not completed their high school diploma had the lowest incomes, were much more likely to be a single parent, and were less likely to be employed or pursuing education. The author also found significant gaps across educational attainment levels for Indigenous and non-Indigenous females and males.

METHODOLOGY

The age group 25 to 34 was selected because the majority in this age bracket were deemed to have sufficient time to complete or attempt to complete post-secondary studies. This lowered the possibility that socioeconomic data would be influenced by student-level incomes (which tend to be lower). Therefore, the author was able to capture an accurate picture of socioeconomic status. The data were gathered from the following three surveys, all conducted by Statistics Canada:

1. Labour Force Survey (LFS, a longitudinal survey from 1990 to 2016);
2. Canadian Income Survey (CIS, data from 2013 to 2015);
3. Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD, data from 2012).

KEY FINDINGS

- According to this study, non-Indigenous Canadians in this age group showed higher levels of educational attainment than their Indigenous counterparts. Across both genders, the percentage of non-Indigenous women and men who obtained post-secondary education was significantly higher. The percentage of non-Indigenous women and men who did not have a high school diploma was lower than that of their Indigenous counterparts.
- The prevalence of single-parent households decreased as educational attainment increased. However, women were much more likely than men to be a single parent.
- While income increased based on educational attainment, women did not attain median incomes that surpassed average incomes for men unless they had obtained a university degree.
- NEET rates decreased as educational attainment increased. However, women showed higher percentages at each interval, despite higher proportions of women who obtained either a collegiate/trade school diploma or a university degree: 76.6% (women) versus 64.3% (men).
- This trend was similar among Indigenous persons. The educational attainment gaps between Indigenous men and women were present, with higher rates of high school non-completion rates among Indigenous men and higher rates of post-secondary completion among Indigenous women.

WHY THIS MATTERS

These findings underscore the value of completing high school for both men and women. Across all variables, socioeconomic status increased with educational attainment. A closer analysis also revealed the impact of gender and race.

This analysis shows that men tend to earn more, on average, across all educational attainment groups, excluding women with a university degree, despite the fact that women are more highly educated than men (76.6% women completed collegiate/trade school or university compared to 64.3% men).

This study also shows how relatively privileged non-Indigenous communities are in regards to educational attainment. Across both genders, the non-Indigenous rates of high school completion were 69% and 58% higher than among the Indigenous population. Higher levels of post-secondary educational attainment were also found in the non-Indigenous population. 76.6% of non-Indigenous women and 64.3% of men in the sample

ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

This study analyzes several key socioeconomic outcomes based on the educational attainment levels of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 34. The author shows the socioeconomic consequences of not completing high school education.

completed either collegiate/trade school degree or university degree. This figure dropped to 55.4% and 45.5%, respectively, for Indigenous women and men.

The findings underscore the high level of need among some groups of Canadians for supports that remove barriers to high school completion and participation in the labour market.

“Western countries have the highest levels of educational attainment in the world. Many individuals, however, do not have a high school diploma [...] For example, among Canadians aged 25 and over in 2016, 14% reported that their highest level of education was ‘less than high school graduation.’”

Uppal, 2017

RECAP

This study shows that significant gaps exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons, with the latter benefiting from higher levels of education. It also shows that, among non-Indigenous Canadians, women generally report smaller median incomes, have higher NEET rates (not in education, employment, or training), and are more likely to be a single parent, despite achieving higher levels of education.

APA CITATION

Uppal, S. (2017). *Young men and women without a high school diploma*. [online] Statistics Canada. Insights on Canadian Society. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2017001/article/14824-eng.htm> [Accessed 12 Jul. 2017].