

ABSTRACT

The objective of our study is to examine the effects of immigration status, school and family experiences in adolescence on completed educational attainment in young adulthood among Asian and Hispanic immigrants. We estimate ordered logistic regression models using data from the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS:88). Our findings indicate that there is considerable ethnic variation in educational attainment by 2000. While Mexican and Puerto Rican youth lag behind Whites, the differences are mainly due to their limited family resources. The educational attainment of Chinese and Southeast Asians, on the other hand, are much higher than that of Whites and are not “explained away” by either the family capital or social/community capital measures. One of our most interesting findings is that being second-generation brings extra advantages for Chinese and Southeast Asian youth while no obvious effects for Mexican and Puerto Rican youth. We also find that attending public schools or minority schools does not necessarily hamper all students’ future educational attainment.