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Early motherhood among off-reserve First Nations, Métis and Inuit women

by Virginie Boulet and Nadine Badets

Release date: December 1st, 2017



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Early motherhood among off-reserve First Nations, Métis and Inuit women

by *Virginie Boulet and Nadine Badets*

Overview of the study

This study uses data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) to examine the prevalence of early motherhood (i.e., having become a mother before the age of 20) among First Nations women living off reserve, Métis women and Inuit women aged 20 to 44. Data from the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS) are used for non-Aboriginal women. The study also examines whether early motherhood is associated with different outcomes in terms of education and employment.

- Among Aboriginal women aged 20 to 44, 45% of Inuit women, 28% of First Nations women living off reserve and 20% of Métis women became mothers before the age of 20. This compared with 6% of non-Aboriginal women in the same age group.
- Among First Nations women living off reserve, women aged 20 to 24 years were less likely to have been early mothers (18%) than women aged 40 to 44 years (30%). The difference was not statistically significant for Métis and Inuit women.
- Aboriginal women who were early mothers were less likely to have a high school diploma. For example, among Inuit women, 40% of those who became mothers in their teenage years had a high school diploma, compared with 59% of Inuit women who had children later in life.
- Among those who had at least a high school diploma, Aboriginal women who experienced motherhood in their teenage years were as likely to be employed as those who experienced motherhood later. This finding is true for all the Aboriginal groups studied.

Introduction

In Canada, the fertility of Aboriginal women has decreased considerably in the past 50 years. Between the late 1960s and the late 1990s, the total fertility rate (TFR), which measures the average number of children that a woman can expect to have over the course of her lifetime, fell from 5.5 children per woman to 2.6 children per woman, bringing the rate substantially closer to that of non-Aboriginal women.¹ This downward trend in the fertility rate continued during the 2000s. In 2011, the total fertility rate for Aboriginal women was 2.2 children per woman, compared with 1.5 children per woman for non-Aboriginal women. However, this rate varied by Aboriginal identity: 2.7 for Inuit women, 2.4 for First Nations women and 1.8 for Métis women.²

The decline in fertility rates was slower among Aboriginal teenagers, and their fertility rates remain significantly higher than those of non-Aboriginal teenagers.³ A study from the mid-2000s suggested that the fertility rate of Aboriginal teenagers aged 15 to 19 years was almost five times higher than that of non-Aboriginal teenagers during the years 1996 to 2001.⁴ Consequently, Aboriginal mothers likely account for a relatively large share of early mothers in Canada.⁵

Among Aboriginal cultures, children are highly respected as gifts from the Creator and must be treated well. Children are the future of Aboriginal populations, and are cherished within Aboriginal families.⁶ However,

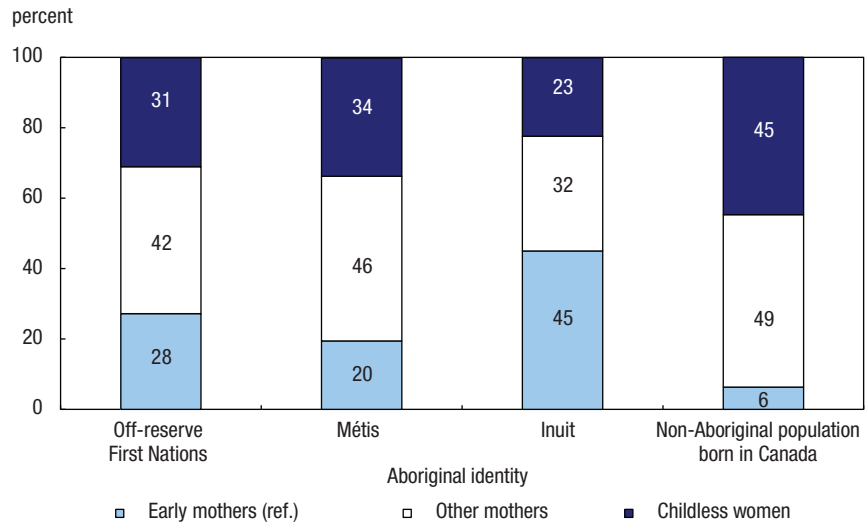
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taking care of a child as a teenager may represent a challenge given the responsibilities associated with motherhood, which can hinder a young woman's progress toward earning a high school diploma⁷ and possibly pursuing postsecondary education.⁸ According to data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), among women aged 18 to 44 years, 38% of Inuit women, and 25% of both First Nations women living off reserve and Métis women dropped out of high school due to pregnancy or to take care of a child.⁸ Given their lower education level, these young women may be at greater risk of unemployment¹⁰ or dependence on social assistance.¹¹

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between early motherhood, education and labour force participation among Aboriginal women in Canada (excluding First Nations women living on reserve). Other studies in Canada have focused on the possible impacts of early motherhood on the entire population. The most recent research showed that giving birth prior to age 20 is associated with a lower probability of completing high school or postsecondary studies. However, if they do obtain a diploma, early mothers are not less likely to work than other mothers.¹² That said, this research has not been extended to Aboriginal populations, i.e., First Nations, Métis and Inuit women, who are more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be early mothers.¹³

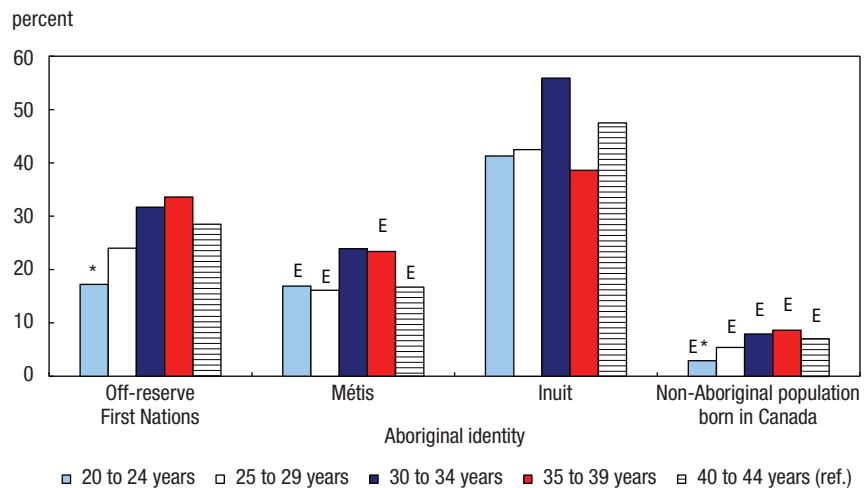
The data used in this study are from the 2012 APS. Data from the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS) were also used to make comparisons with the non-Aboriginal population in private households living in Canadian provinces.¹⁴ However, the GSS does not include key questions on the educational experience

Chart 1
Distribution of women aged 20 to 44 by motherhood status, by Aboriginal identity, 2011 and 2012



Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; General Social Survey, 2011.

Chart 2
Proportion of women who became mothers before the age of 20, by Aboriginal identity and age group, 2011 and 2012



^E use with caution

* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)

Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; General Social Survey, 2011.

of respondents when they were attending high school. Consequently, the comparisons with non-Aboriginal women are limited to the descriptive results in the study.

The population of interest consists of all women aged 20 to 44. "Early mothers" are defined as women aged 20 to 44 who bore their first child during their teenage years (i.e., before the age of 20), and comparisons are

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made with other women in the same age group, including women who became mothers after the age of 20, and women without children. Among Aboriginal women, only those who reported a single identity (First Nations living off reserve, Métis or Inuk/Inuit) were selected.¹⁵ As for non-Aboriginal women, those who reported having been born outside Canada were excluded from the sample.¹⁶ It should also be noted that each of the Aboriginal groups is analyzed separately throughout this study.

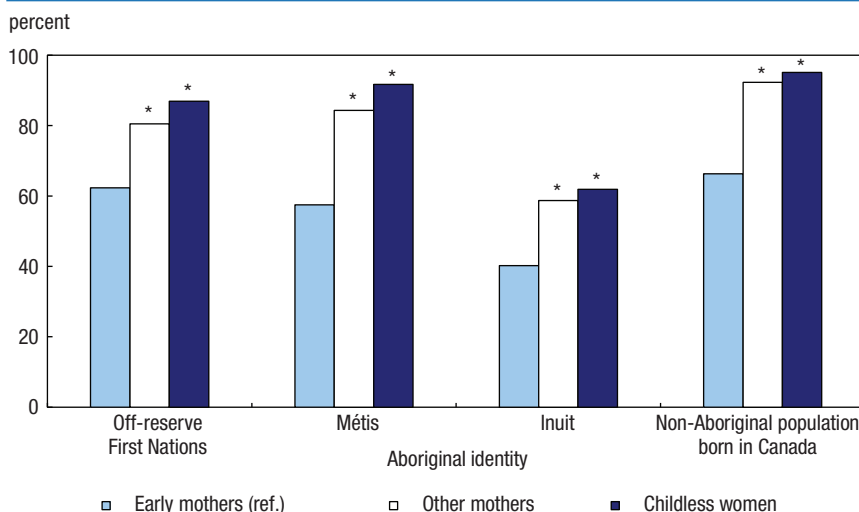
The relationship between early motherhood and outcomes such as high school completion or employment may not be causal. Other background factors might also play a role in the future outcomes of Aboriginal women. For this reason, the results of this study should be interpreted as associations, not as causal relationships.

Almost half of Inuit women became mothers during their teenage years

Examining the percentage of all women aged 20 to 44 who became mothers before the age of 20 (Chart 1) can provide an idea of the prevalence of early motherhood. Between Aboriginal groups, this percentage was highest among Inuit women, 45% of whom were early mothers. Among First Nations women living off reserve, more than a quarter (28%) were early mothers, while the same was true for one out of five (20%) Métis women, and less than 1 out of 10 (6%) non-Aboriginal women.

Combining women who became mothers as teenagers with women who became mothers in later years, the proportion of women aged 20 to 44 who were mothers was close to 8 out of 10 among Inuit

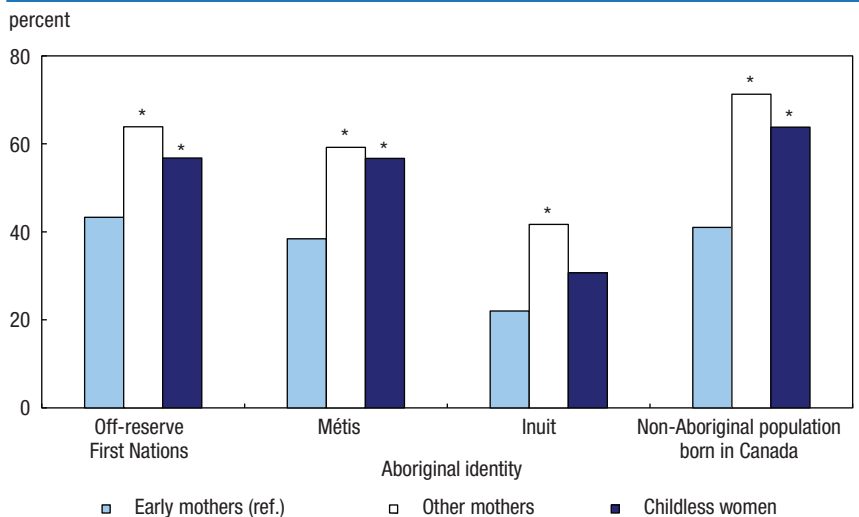
Chart 3
Proportion of women aged 20 to 44 with a high school diploma, by Aboriginal identity and motherhood status, 2011 and 2012



* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)

Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; General Social Survey, 2011.

Chart 4
Proportion of women aged 20 to 44 with a postsecondary certificate or diploma, by Aboriginal identity and motherhood status, 2011 and 2012



* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)

Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; General Social Survey, 2011.

women, and more than two-thirds among off-reserve First Nations and Métis women. By comparison, just over half of Canadian-born non-Aboriginal women in the same age group became mothers.

Younger women are less likely than older women to have experienced motherhood during their teenage years. However, the difference between women aged 40 to 44 and women aged 20 to 24

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was only significant for First Nations women living off reserve (30% and 18%, respectively) and for non-Aboriginal women (7% and 3%, respectively). Among Métis and Inuit women, the proportions for younger and older women were not statistically different (Chart 2).

Women who had a child in adolescence are less likely to have completed high school

Among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, the proportion of women with at least a high school diploma¹⁷ was significantly lower among women who had their first child during adolescence (Chart 3). For example, among Métis women aged 20 to 44, 58% of those who had a child during adolescence had a high school diploma, compared with 84% of other mothers in the same age group, and 92% of childless women.

Although smaller, the difference between early mothers and the other groups was also significant among off-reserve First Nations, Inuit and non-Aboriginal women. Among Inuit women aged 20 to 44, 40% of early mothers had completed a high school diploma, compared with approximately 60% for the other groups of Inuit women.

The proportion of women who earned a postsecondary certificate or diploma also varied significantly by motherhood status (Chart 4).¹⁸ For example, among Inuit women aged 20 to 44, 22% of early mothers earned a postsecondary certificate or diploma, compared with 42% of women who became mothers in later years. However, the difference between early mothers and the other groups of women was highest among non-Aboriginal women. In fact, among non-Aboriginal women, there was a 30 percentage point difference in the rate of earning of a

Table 1
Predicted probability of having a high school diploma, Aboriginal women aged 20 to 44, by Aboriginal identity and selected characteristics, 2012

	Aboriginal identity		
	Off-reserve First Nations	Métis	Inuit
	predicted probability		
Motherhood status			
Early mothers (ref.)	0.66	0.64	0.44
Other mothers	0.78*	0.83*	0.53*
Childless women	0.85*	0.90*	0.59*
Age group			
20 to 24 years	0.65*	0.76*	0.44
25 to 29 years	0.71*	0.76*	0.53
30 to 34 years	0.79	0.83	0.56
35 to 39 years	0.84	0.85	0.53
40 to 44 years (ref.)	0.80	0.86	0.47
Inuit Nunangat			
Yes	...	...	0.46*
No (ref.)	...	...	0.60
Parental education			
At least one parent with a high school diploma	0.82*	0.83	0.59
Neither parent with a high school diploma (ref.)	0.70	0.80	0.52
Unknown ¹	0.64	0.70	0.37*
Repeated a grade			
Yes	0.68*	0.73*	0.45
No (ref.)	0.81	0.84	0.53
Grades			
Above average	0.85*	0.89*	0.61*
Average (ref.)	0.75	0.79	0.49
Below average	0.61*	0.59*	0.19*
Close friends who dropped out of school			
Most or all	0.73	0.74	0.43*
None or some (ref.)	0.78	0.82	0.52
Felt safe at school			
No	0.66*	0.61*	0.29*
Yes (ref.)	0.78	0.83	0.51
School supported Aboriginal cultures			
No	0.78	0.81	0.48
Yes (ref.)	0.76	0.81	0.51

... not applicable

* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)

1. Given the high non-response rate to questions about the mother's and father's education level, an "unknown" category was created to avoid reducing the size of the analysis sample below a viable threshold.

Note: Predicted probabilities are derived from marginal effects at the mean, based on logistic regressions.

Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

postsecondary certificate or diploma between early mothers and mothers who had children later in life.

It is important to consider other factors that could influence the earning of a diploma, in order to confirm whether early motherhood is associated with a greater probability

of not completing studies. In the model presented in Table 1, the dependent variable is having completed a high school diploma (or equivalent), while other factors are included as explanatory variables. A predicted probability of 0.50, for example, indicates that the probability to complete high school is 50%

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for people who belong to a given category (all else equal). Separate models were developed for each Aboriginal group.

After taking various factors into account, including parental education and grades, First Nations women living off reserve (66%), Métis women (64%) and Inuit women (44%) who were early mothers remained less likely to have completed a high school diploma than other mothers (78%, 83% and 53%, respectively) and childless women (85%, 90% and 59%, respectively) (Table 1). This result may not be surprising, since many of the women who had their first child before the age of 20 had not completed high school at the time.¹⁹

Other results suggest that among off-reserve First Nations and Métis women, those who were aged less than 30 were less likely to have a diploma than those who were aged 40 to 44.²⁰ Moreover, among Inuit women, residing in Inuit Nunangat was associated with a lower probability of having a high school diploma when other factors were taken into account. It should be noted that results from the 2011 National Household Survey show rates of high school completion, or the equivalent, to be similarly low for Inuit and non-Aboriginal people living in Inuit Nunangat.²¹ This could indicate a lack of educational services or difficulties accessing a high school education.

Off-reserve First Nations women who had at least one parent with a high school diploma were more likely to complete high school (82%) than those whose parents did not have a high school diploma (70%).²² Furthermore, Inuit women who did not know the education level of their parents were less likely to have a high school diploma than those who did.

Getting below-average grades was associated with a lower likelihood of completing high school. Other factors associated with a lower probability of completion included feeling unsafe at school and repeating a grade.

When they have at least a high school diploma, early mothers are as likely to be employed as other mothers

Among off-reserve First Nations and Métis women, those who became mothers before the age of 20 were less likely to be employed than other mothers and childless women (Chart 5). Among Inuit women, just over half of early mothers were employed. This percentage is significantly lower than the one for other mothers (64%), but not significantly different from the rate for childless women. For non-Aboriginal women, those without children were the most likely to be employed (83%). This compared with 69% of early mothers.

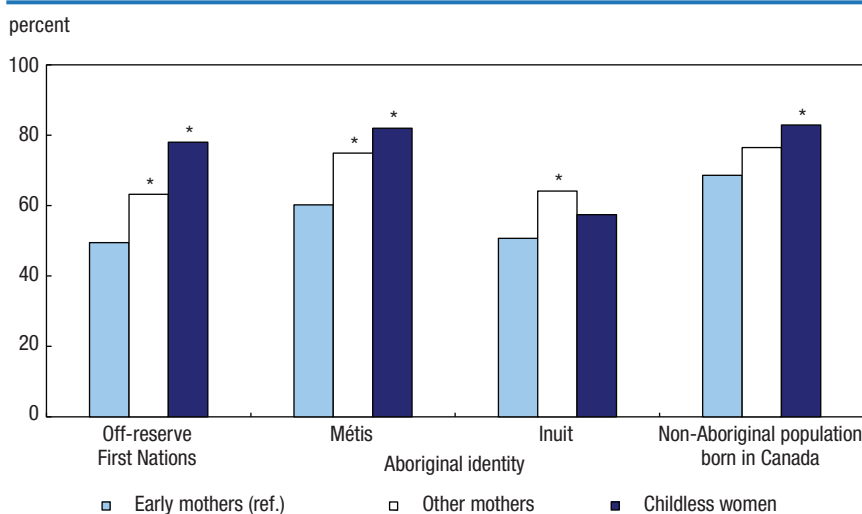
To study the association between early motherhood, high school completion and employment, a variable dividing all women aged 20 to 44 into six groups²³ was used in a model:

- (1) early mothers without a high school diploma;
- (2) other mothers without a high school diploma;
- (3) childless women without a high school diploma;
- (4) early mothers with at least a high school diploma;
- (5) other mothers with at least a high school diploma;
- (6) childless women with at least a high school diploma.

In addition to the variable above, other factors that may have an influence on the probability of being employed such as age, living arrangements and health status were also included.

Results show that in all groups, both early mothers and other mothers without a high school diploma were

Chart 5
Proportion of women aged 20 to 44 who were employed, by Aboriginal identity and motherhood status, 2011 and 2012



* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)

Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012; General Social Survey, 2011.

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Table 2
Predicted probability of being employed, Aboriginal women aged 20 to 44,
by Aboriginal identity and selected characteristics, 2012

	Aboriginal identity		
	Off-reserve First Nations	Métis	Inuit
	predicted probability		
Motherhood status and high school completion			
Early mothers, no diploma	0.40*	0.46*	0.38*
Other mothers, no diploma	0.41*	0.53*	0.53*
Childless women, no diploma	0.51	0.61	0.44*
Early mothers, with diploma (ref.)	0.59	0.74	0.67
Other mothers, with diploma	0.65	0.77	0.64
Childless women, with diploma	0.80*	0.83	0.76
Age group			
20 to 24 years	0.50*	0.69	0.45*
25 to 29 years	0.55*	0.72	0.56
30 to 34 years	0.64*	0.73	0.56
35 to 39 years	0.66	0.76	0.67
40 to 44 years (ref.)	0.72	0.76	0.58
Inuit Nunangat			
Yes	...	...	0.56
No (ref.)	...	...	0.55
Student			
Yes	0.55*	0.71	0.43
No (ref.)	0.64	0.74	0.57
Living arrangements			
Couple without children (ref.)	0.70	0.77	0.51
Couple with children	0.63	0.73	0.60
Lone parent	0.57*	0.72	0.49
One-person household	0.67	0.71	0.39
Other	0.74	0.76	0.48
Self-perceived overall health status			
Poor	0.44*	0.57*	0.40*
Good (ref.)	0.70	0.78	0.59

... not applicable

* significantly different from reference category (ref.) ($p < 0.05$)

Note: Predicted probabilities are derived from marginal effects at the mean, based on logistic regressions.

Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

less likely to be employed than early mothers with at least a high school diploma (Table 2).

For example, among off-reserve First Nations mothers without a high school diploma, the likelihood of being employed was approximately 40%, whether they became mothers

in their teens or later in life. This compared with 59% for early mothers with a diploma.

One group that had a higher probability to work than early mothers with a diploma was that of childless women with a diploma, but this result was only significant for off-reserve First Nations women.

The results above suggest that completing high school is an important factor associated with labour force participation—more so than early motherhood. In fact, high school graduates who became mothers in their teenage years are just as likely to be employed as high school graduates who became mothers in later years. This result is similar to the results of other studies based on the overall population.²⁴

Among Inuit women, those who had at least a high school diploma and who became mothers in their teenage years (representing 18% of all Inuit women aged 20 to 44) had a 67% probability to be employed. This probability was significantly higher than that of early mothers who did not complete high school (38%). Inuit women without a diploma and without children were less likely to be employed than Inuit women who completed high school and were early mothers.

The model also provided other information. Firstly, attending school lowered the likelihood of being employed among First Nations women living off reserve, but the correlation was not significant for Métis and Inuit women. As for living arrangements, being a single parent (as opposed to being part of a couple without children) significantly lowered the probability of being employed among off-reserve First Nations women. Finally, for all groups of Aboriginal women, those who reported their physical and/or mental health status as “poor” were less likely to be employed than those who reported their health status as “good”.

Conclusion

Research indicates that mothers who have their first child in their teenage years sometimes face additional socioeconomic challenges. This study expands that literature by examining the possible impacts of early motherhood on Aboriginal women aged 20 to 44—specifically, First Nations women living off reserve, Métis women and Inuit women.

The results show that the prevalence of early motherhood is higher among Aboriginal women, particularly Inuit women. However, it appears that

this prevalence is declining among younger generations of First Nations women living off reserve – however this trend was not observed among Métis and Inuit women.

Aboriginal women who were early mothers are less likely to have a high school diploma or equivalent, even when other factors that also influence the probability of completing high school, such as age, grades or parental education, are taken into account.

With respect to the likelihood of being employed, the results show that when women who were early mothers earn their high school diploma, they

are as likely to find employment as women who completed high school and became mothers in later years. These results suggest that although early motherhood is associated with a lower probability of completing high school, it does not necessarily prevent these women from participating in the labour force once they earn their high school diploma.

Virginie Boulet and Nadine Badets were analysts with Statistics Canada's Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division when this study was conducted.

Data sources, methods and definitions

Data sources

The data used for the Aboriginal population are from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), a survey conducted every five years. Its target population consists of off-reserve First Nations people, Métis and Inuit aged 6 years and older. The cycle used in the current study pertained to education, employment and health. The data used for the non-Aboriginal population are from the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS). The target population of that survey consists of individuals aged 15 or older living in any of the 10 Canadian provinces.

Methods

In this report, the predicted probabilities were calculated using logistic regressions, and were derived based on marginal effects at the mean. Respondents with a missing value for one or more variables used in this analysis were removed from the sample. Variances were calculated using bootstrap weights.

Definitions

Inuit Nunangat: The Inuit Homeland, consisting of four Inuit regions: Nunatsiavut (Northern coastal Labrador), Nunavik (Northern Quebec), the territory of Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories.

Grades: In the APS, respondents were asked to assess their grade average for their last year of elementary or high school, expressed as a percentage. Those who reported not receiving a grade or not knowing the answer, or who refused to answer, were asked if their grades were above average, about average, or below average. Respondents who reported a grade average of 80% or more were considered above average, those who reported a grade average of 60% to 79% were considered about average, and those who reported a grade average below 60% were considered below average.

Close friends who dropped out of school: In the APS, respondents were asked how many of their close friends in their last year of school dropped out before earning their high school diploma.

Felt safe at school: APS respondents had to indicate whether they agreed with a series of statements, one of which asked whether they felt safe at school during their last year at elementary or high school. Those who answered “strongly agree” or “agree” were placed in the “yes” category, while those who answered “strongly disagree” or “disagree” were placed in the “no” category.

School supported Aboriginal cultures: APS respondents were also asked whether the school they attended during their last year of elementary or high school supported First Nations, Métis or Inuit cultures through teaching or activities. Those who responded “strongly agree” or “agree” were placed in the “yes” category, while those who responded “strongly disagree” or “disagree” were placed in the “no” category.

Self-perceived overall health status: This variable was created based on two questions in which respondents were asked to assess their physical health status and mental health status. Women who reported that their physical or mental health status was poor or fair were considered to have a “poor” self-perceived overall health status.

Limitations

Since the APS is a cross-sectional survey, inferences cannot be made with respect to causality. Results must therefore be interpreted as associations between variables. Furthermore, some longitudinal studies have found that the impact of early motherhood on education are somewhat mitigated when consideration is given to the socioeconomic context in which the women lived during their teenage years, as early motherhood is more frequent among women with precarious socioeconomic backgrounds.²⁵ Since the 2012 APS data do not contain variables that can be used to retroactively control for these factors, the associations made between early motherhood and education in this study may be overestimated.

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Supplementary information

Table A1
Distribution of Aboriginal women aged 20 to 44, by Aboriginal identity and selected characteristics, 2012

	Aboriginal identity		
	Off-reserve First Nations	Métis	Inuit
	percent		
Motherhood status			
Early mothers	27.9	19.9	45.1
Other mothers	41.5	46.4	31.9
Childless women	30.5	33.7	22.8
Motherhood status and high school completion			
Early mothers, no diploma	10.5	8.4	26.9
Other mothers, no diploma	8.0	7.2	13.2
Childless women, no diploma	3.9	2.7	8.7 ^E
Early mothers, with diploma	17.4	11.4	18.1
Other mothers, with diploma	33.4	39.1	18.7
Childless women, with diploma	26.5	30.9	14.1
High school completion			
Yes	77.4	81.5	51.1
No	22.5	18.5	48.8
Employed			
Yes	63.5	74.1	56.6
No	36.4	25.8	43.3
Age group			
20 to 24 years	19.4	21.1	26.4
25 to 29 years	17.5	20.8	20.9
30 to 34 years	18.5	22.2	18.8
35 to 39 years	23.4	18.4	16.0
40 to 44 years	20.9	17.3	17.7
Inuit Nunangat			
Yes	...	...	72.2
No	...	...	27.7
Parental education			
At least one parent with a high school diploma	71.0	76.5	37.2
Neither parent with a high school diploma	16.7	16.4	32.5
Unknown	12.2	7.0	30.2
Repeated a grade			
Yes	26.2	19.2	38.8
No	73.7	80.8	61.2
Grades			
Above average	35.1	39.3	26.8
Average	59.0	55.0	63.2
Below average	5.7	5.6	9.8
Close friends who dropped out of school			
Most or all	14.9	9.5	25.8
None or some	85.0	90.4	74.1
Felt safe at school			
Yes	90.4	92.1	93.0
No	9.5	7.8	6.9 ^E
School supported Aboriginal cultures			
Yes	45.3	42.0	78.6
No	54.7	57.9	21.3
Student			
Yes	17.1	14.0	10.2 ^E
No	82.8	85.9	89.7
Living arrangements			
Couple without children	11.4	13.2	8.9
Couple with children	38.8	46.4	58.1
Lone parent	34.4	25.3	21.9
One-person household	8.5	8.2	3.9 ^E
Other	6.7	6.7	6.9 ^E
Self-perceived overall health status			
Poor	26.2	22.1	20.9
Good	73.7	77.8	79.0

... not applicable

^E use with caution

Note: The sum of the categories may not always add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012.

Notes

1. See Ram (2004).
2. See Arriagada (2016).
3. See Ram (2004); Robitaille et al. (2004).
4. See Ram (2004).
5. See O'Donnell and Wallace (2011). In Canada, the decrease in the fertility rate among teenagers aged 15 to 19 years continued from 2001 to 2014 (see CANSIM table 102-4505), but it is not known whether this recent decline was also observed for Aboriginal teenagers. However, assuming that the fertility rate is five times higher for Aboriginal teenagers than it is for other women (as shown by Ram 2004), Aboriginal teenagers are likely overrepresented among early mothers in Canada.
6. See Government of Canada (1996).
7. See Arriagada (2016); Boden et al. (2008); Bougie et al. (2013); Diaz and Fiel (2016); Lee (2010); Otterblad Olausson et al. (2001); and Robson and Berthoud (2003).
8. See Boden et al. (2008); Diaz and Fiel (2016); Lee (2010); and Robitaille et al. (2004).
9. See Arriagada (2016); Bougie et al. (2013).
10. See Arriagada (2016); Boden et al. (2008); Bougie et al. (2013); Deslauriers et al. (2011); Lee (2010); Otterblad Olausson et al. (2001); and Robson and Berthoud (2003).
11. See Boden et al. (2008); Garner et al. (2013); Gibb et al. (2015); Lee (2010); and Otterblad Olausson et al. (2001).
12. See Luong (2008).
13. It is important to mention the endogenous nature of early motherhood. According to various studies (Klepinger et al. 1995; Hoffman et al. 1993; Ashcraft and Lang 2006), the effects of early childbearing on certain socioeconomic outcomes as an adult depend not only on motherhood, but also on circumstantial factors that are likely to be found among early mothers (e.g., less use of preventive measures such as birth control or abortion, or less of an intention to pursue a postsecondary education). Generally speaking, these studies used the instrumental variable method to test the endogeneity of early childbearing. The marginal effects of early childbearing are sometimes underestimated but remain significant in most cases. The instrumental variable method was not used in the current study, given the difficulty in finding a suitable instrument with the data from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey.

14. The General Social Survey (GSS) does not include residents from Nunavut, Yukon or the Northwest Territories.
15. Women who reported multiple Aboriginal identities or a single other Aboriginal identity were not sufficient in numbers to be included in a distinct category.
16. Since immigrants generally have a higher education level and lower employment rates than the non-immigrant Canadian population, their inclusion in the sample could make the results more difficult to interpret.
17. With respect to non-Aboriginal women, only those who earned a high school diploma were identified because the GSS data cannot be used to identify respondents who have obtained an equivalency.
18. Includes all individuals who earned a certificate, diploma or degree from an apprenticeship program, trade school, college, CEGEP, non-university institution or university.
19. Past research has also shown that for Aboriginal peoples in Canada, learning is a lifelong and holistic process with diverse educational pathways, which include leaving and returning to school later in life (Bougie et al., 2013).
20. It should be noted that among First Nations people living off reserve, the Métis and the Inuit, a significant proportion leave school at least once before returning to obtain a high school diploma (see Bougie et al., 2013).
21. See Li and Smith (2016).
22. Cases that were classified as “unknown” were removed from the sample.
23. To see how First Nations women living off reserve, Métis women and Inuit women are distributed across the six groups, see Table A1 in the Supplementary information section.
24. See Luong (2008).
25. See Boden et al. (2008); Diaz and Fiel (2016); Fletcher and Wolfe (2009); Hotz et al. (2005); and Lee (2010).

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