

Asians outperform white students because they try harder, study finds

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The findings were based on an analysis of records from two separate surveys tracking several thousand whites and Asians in the United States from kindergarten through [high school](#).

Scientists at Queens College of New York, the University of Michigan and Peking University in Beijing looked at grades, test scores, teacher ratings, family income and education level, immigration status and other factors.

"Asian-Americans enter school with no discernible academic advantage over whites," said the study, noting that "advantage grows over time."

By fifth grade, or age 10-11, Asian-Americans "significantly outperform whites," and the peak difference is reached by grade 10, or age 15-16.

"Overall, these results suggest that the growing [achievement gap](#) can be attributed to a widening gap in academic effort rather than to differences in cognitive ability."

Asian-Americans tend to be motivated by cultural teachings that instill the notion that effort is more important than inborn ability, researchers said.

They also endure "greater parental pressures to succeed than in the case of comparable [white](#) peers."

The notion of a hard-working Asian student who is destined to succeed may be a stereotype, but it may actually work to the benefit of Asian-American youths, the researchers said.

"These positive stereotypes may help bolster Asian-American achievement just as negative stereotypes have been shown to hinder the achievement of African-American youth," said the article.

Asian-Americans' higher degree of success comes at a price, however.

Whether their family lineage traces back to the Philippines, South Asia,

Southeast Asia or East Asia, these children report fewer positive feelings about themselves and say they spend less time with friends than whites, the study found.

"They also have more conflict with both parents than comparable white peers," it said.

The research was published in the May 5 edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: "Explaining Asian Americans' academic advantage over whites," by Amy Hsin and Yu Xie, *PNAS*, 2014.
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