

Study: How Do Women in Male-dominated Apprenticeships Fare in the Labour Market?

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Over the last several decades, women's labour force participation rose substantially in Canada. Although this increase has contributed to more women entering male-dominated occupations, they continue to be underrepresented within the skilled trades.

The study, "How Do Women in Male-dominated Apprenticeships Fare in the Labour Market?" was released today as part of Statistics Canada's Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics.

Increasing women's participation in male-dominated trades has been identified as a means of improving the supply of skilled tradespersons in Canada, creating a more diverse labour force and increasing women's wages. Moreover, previous studies have shown that women who selected a male-dominated apprenticeship program have more favourable labour market outcomes than women with only a high school diploma or who studied in a female-dominated apprenticeship program.

However, little information exists about how well women in male-dominated apprenticeships fare in the labour market compared with their male counterparts.

A new Statistics Canada study compares the labour market outcomes of women and men who selected male-dominated apprenticeship programs. The study uses the 2015 National Apprenticeship Survey and the 2014 T1 Family File to examine several labour market outcomes of apprentices within the first four years following the end of their program.

These outcomes include hourly wages, employment status, self-employment, obtaining a job related to the training program, hours worked per week, union membership, and a series of job benefits (such as extended health care, sick leave, and retirement plan benefits).

Male-dominated apprenticeship programs are defined as registered apprenticeship programs in which at least 75% of enrollees are male, and include apprenticeships such as plumber, carpenter, gas fitter, tool and die maker and welder.

The study found that just over one in five (20.7%) female apprentices were in male-dominated programs. In contrast, 0.5% of male apprentices chose a female-dominated program (such as estheticians or hairstylists). Factors that were positively associated with female apprentices selecting a male-dominated apprenticeship included being Canadian-born, being older, having a father with a trades certificate, and having participated in a Youth Apprenticeship Program or in a trade, vocational, or technical program during high school.

Results from the study suggest that women who registered in male-dominated apprenticeship programs generally had poorer labour market outcomes than their male counterparts in similar programs. For example, the median hourly wages of women in these programs were 14% less than their male counterparts, after taking into account gender differences in age, pre-apprenticeship work experience, program of study, and program completion status (completer versus discontinuer).

Compared with their male counterparts, women who selected male-dominated apprenticeship programs were also less likely to be employed, self-employed, or to receive five of the six types of benefits that were examined (specifically, extended health, dental, retirement plan, paid vacation, and other benefits apart from sick leave; the prevalence of sick leave benefits was about the same for women and men). A labour market outcome that is of particular interest to postsecondary students is obtaining employment that is related to their program of study. Overall, 56% of women who were apprentices in male-dominated programs reported holding a job that was related to their trade of study, compared with 71% of their male counterparts.



In comparison, women who selected female-dominated or mixed (neither male- nor female-dominated) apprenticeship programs experienced fewer (and generally smaller) disadvantages in terms of labour market outcomes than men who selected the same types of programs.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3160](#).

The research paper "[How Do Women in Male-dominated Apprenticeships Fare in the Labour Market?](#)," which is part of the *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series* ([11F0019M](#)), is now available.

For more information contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

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