

## 2.4 Stereotypes, Society and Culture



### 2 MIN READ

Stereotypes are quite powerful — they can pose a significant challenge for women entrepreneurs when they become social and cultural norms.

### Continuing the journey

Women have certainly succeeded in taking on a larger role in the global economy. Despite this progress, they still face inequalities in the labour market and the world of entrepreneurship. Celebrating the great strides women have made is important, but the journey is far from over — many challenges remain on the road ahead when it comes to continually improving the future of women entrepreneurship.

### Did you know?

- Even though the percentage of women and men is almost equal in the labour market, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions.<sup>1</sup>
- In Canada, for each dollar earned by a man, a woman earns only \$0.88.<sup>2</sup>
- Without concrete actions, it could take another 100 years before genuine economic, social and political parity is reached between women and men.<sup>3</sup>



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## Micro-aggressions

Studies and testimonials confirm that many women still experience micro-aggressions in the workplace. This reality becomes even more acute when women are working alone or find themselves in a minority, which is often the case with management positions and women entrepreneurs.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Micro-aggressions can take many forms. Based on gender, here are some examples:<sup>5</sup>***

- Making hostile, derogatory or harmful comments.
- Engaging in inappropriate non-verbal behaviour.
- Excluding co-workers from activities, discussions or meetings.
- Calling into question women's expertise and skills.
- Preventing women from accessing advancement and professional development opportunities.

## Women entrepreneurs and media coverage

Media outlets play a vital role in promoting women entrepreneurship — they are key influencers in inspiring women entrepreneurs. Here are a few interesting findings from studies focusing on media coverage of women entrepreneurs in Canada:

- In the media, women are depicted less favourably than men — and are regarded less often as leaders or entrepreneurs.<sup>6</sup>
- The media tends to scrutinize women's personal and private lives more than men's.<sup>7</sup>
- Men entrepreneurs are three times more likely than women to be portrayed in the media as experts.<sup>8</sup>
- Men are often portrayed in the media as born entrepreneurs who chose entrepreneurship out of passion — while they tend to show women become entrepreneurs out of necessity.<sup>9</sup>

## Fitting the entrepreneurial image

Traditionally, the image of entrepreneurs conveyed in our society is that of an aggressive and bold “self-made man,” which stands in stark contrast to the image typically assigned to women. Even today, women are still seen as more empathetic, sensitive and emotional. Women, then, are faced with a daunting challenge. On the one hand, if they have the traits of a typical entrepreneur, they don't fit the image of an “ideal” woman and are therefore considered less “feminine.”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, if they have characteristics typically associated with women, they aren't seen as fitting the entrepreneurial image. Unlike men entrepreneurs, women may find themselves being pulled in two directions at the same time.



**To learn more, check out these tools:**

- **5.3 Motivation and Risk Adversity**
- **5.7 Mastering the Balancing Act**

## References

- 1 McKinsey & Company (June 2019). Women Matter, The present and future of women at work in Canada, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20present%20and%20future%20of%20women%20at%20work%20in%20canada/the-present-and-future-of-women-at-work-in-canada-vf.ashx>, p. 10.
- 2 Julie Cafley, Katie Davey, Tania Saba, Simon Blanchette et al. (September 2020). Economic Equality in a Changing World: Removing Barriers to Employment for Women, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, <https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RemovingBarriersToEmploymentForWomen-PPF-Sept2020-EN.pdf>, p. 3.; Laura Cooper (2017). The State of Women in Canada's Economy: In Pictures. RBC Economics: Research, [http://www.rbc.com/economics/economic-reports/pdf/other-reports/Women\\_Mar2017.pdf](http://www.rbc.com/economics/economic-reports/pdf/other-reports/Women_Mar2017.pdf), p. 1.
- 3 Guiseppina Maria Cardella, Brizeida Raquel Hernandez-Sanchez and José Carlos Sanchez-Garcia (July 17th 2020). "Women Entrepreneurship: A Systematic Review to Outline the Boundaries of Scientific Literature", *Frontiers in Psychology*, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01557/full> (page consulted September 25th 2020).; World Economic Forum (December 2019). Global Gender Gap Report 2020, [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf), p. 6.
- 4 McKinsey & Company (June 2019). Women Matter, The present and future of women at work in Canada, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20present%20and%20future%20of%20women%20at%20work%20in%20canada/the-present-and-future-of-women-at-work-in-canada-vf.ashx>, p. 24.
- 5 McKinsey & Company (June 2019). Women Matter, The present and future of women at work in Canada, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20present%20and%20future%20of%20women%20at%20work%20in%20canada/the-present-and-future-of-women-at-work-in-canada-vf.ashx>, p. 24.
- 6 Julie Cafley, Katie Davey, Tania Saba, Simon Blanchette et al. (September 2020). Economic Equality in a Changing World: Removing Barriers to Employment for Women, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, <https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RemovingBarriersToEmploymentForWomen-PPF-Sept2020-EN.pdf>, p. 24.
- 7 Julie Cafley, Katie Davey, Tania Saba, Simon Blanchette et al. (September 2020). Economic Equality in a Changing World: Removing Barriers to Employment for Women, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, <https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RemovingBarriersToEmploymentForWomen-PPF-Sept2020-EN.pdf>, p. 24.
- 8 Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (2020). The State of Women's Entrepreneurship in Canada 2020, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, p. 26.
- 9 Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (2020). The State of Women's Entrepreneurship in Canada 2020, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, p. 26.

10 Guiseppina Maria Cardella, Brizeida Raquel Hernandez-Sanchez and José Carlos Sanchez-Garcia (July 17th 2020).

“Women Entrepreneurship: A Systematic Review to Outline the Boundaries of Scientific Literature”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01557/full> (page consulted September 25th 2020).; McKinsey & Company (June 2019). *Women Matter, The present and future of women at work in Canada*, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/gender%20equality/the%20present%20and%20future%20of%20women%20at%20work%20in%20canada/the-present-and-future-of-women-at-work-in-canada-vf.ashx>, p. 42.; Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (2020). *The State of Women’s Entrepreneurship in Canada 2020*, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, p. 35.

## Disclaimer

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