



PUBLICATION FACTS

JOURNAL

CANADIAN PUBLIC POLICY-
ANALYSE DE POLITIQUES

PUBLICATION DATE

2018

VOLUME/ISSUE

44

PAGES

S73-S90

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UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CANADA'S INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR:WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM A CANADIAN SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS?

ABSTRACT

The proportion of women in Canada's information and communication technology (ICT) sector is well below their proportion in other fields. One hypothesis for this phenomenon is that women may not have the "right stuff" to be heavily involved in ICT. We use basic ICT scores derived from Statistics Canada's 2012 Survey of Adult Skills, which is the Canadian portion of the 2012 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies as a proxy for the "right stuff." We find that, after controlling for appropriate covariates, Canadian women score higher than men on basic ICT skills. However, women with the same ICT test scores are much less likely than men to be employed in ICT occupations. We also find that hourly wages in ICT occupations are lower for women, but this wage gap is no greater than that in the general labour market. Given the current and projected shortages of ICT professionals, women represent a large, yet untapped, pool of talent for this sector.

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Times Cited

8

Journal Citation
Indicator

0.54