

bizwomen

THE BUSINESS JOURNALS

Note: This Content is published in its entirety from **bizwoman Magazine**

Public perception finally agrees: Women are as competent as men

Anne Stych, Contributing Writer

Aug 13, 2019,



A study found that gender stereotypes have changed dramatically.

Public perception has finally caught up with the idea **that women are as competent as men** — or **even more so**, a new study found.

The increased confidence in women's abilities over several decades has been driven by women's steadily-increasing participation in the workforce and increased attainment of advanced degrees, researchers found.

“As the roles of women and men have changed since the mid-20th century, so have beliefs about their attributes,” said Alice Eagly of Northwestern University, lead author on the study.

The [research by the American Psychological Association](#), published recently in the journal *American Psychologist*, found that competence stereotypes changed dramatically in the decades between 1946 and 2018.

In the earliest survey, only 35 percent of respondents thought men and women were equally intelligent, and among those who saw a difference, more thought that men were smarter.

However, a 2018 poll found that **86 percent of those surveyed believed men and women were equally intelligent, and of those who thought one gender had an edge over another, 9 percent believed women were more intelligent and 5 percent said men were smarter.**

“Challenging traditional claims that stereotypes of women and men are fixed or rigid, our study joins others in finding stereotypes to be flexible to changes in social roles,” Eagly said.

In 2018, nearly 76 million women participated in the labor force, representing nearly half (46.9 percent) of U. S. workers, [Catalyst](#) reported.

Around 57 percent of women participate in the labor force, compared to 69 percent of men.

In 2017, around 34.6 percent of women graduated from college or obtained a higher educational degree, more than eight times as many as in 1940, per Statista. In 2014, the number of women who had completed four years of college or more surpassed the number of men.

Sign up for free newsletter

<https://www.bizjournals.com/bizwomen>