

DEBUNKING MODEL MINORITY EMPLOYMENT MYTHS

The model minority myth claims that Asians are the most successful among non-White groups. It assumes all Asians to be smart (i.e. naturally good at math, science, and technology), wealthy, hard-working, self-reliant, docile, submissive, obedient, uncomplaining, and not needing assistance (The University of Texas, 2019). Model minority myths use the accomplishments of certain minority groups to diminish racism (Low, 2021). This process creates tensions between different racialized communities, because it undermines the role racism plays in achieving success (Chow, 2017). Below are myths and facts about Asian employment experiences.

MYTH

VS.

FACT

It is unlikely for Asian Canadians to be unemployed, due to their acceptance in the Canadian workforce.



Unemployment rates among Southeast Asian Canadians increased in January 2021, bringing their total unemployment rate to 20.1% (Stats Canada, 2021).

Asians Canadians do not experience discrimination in the workplace, because they are hard-working and do not complain.



Asian Canadians experience discrimination in the workplace and face economic inequality as a result. They are also subject to harmful stereotyping, leading to unrealistic and racist work expectations (Boyd & Tian, 2016).

Employers do not discriminate against Asians during hiring processes.



Studies from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver found that resumes with English-sounding names are 35% more likely to receive call-backs than resumes with Chinese or Indian sounding names (Oreopoulos & Dechief, 2012).

East Asian Canadians have equal salaries and equal employment opportunities as White Canadians.



East Asians only achieve economic equality with White Canadians when they have higher levels of education. The earnings of East Asians are seen to be significantly lower in comparison to equally educated White Canadians (Boyd & Tian, 2016).

Wage gaps between racialized and White workers in Canada have been closing over the past decade.



When comparing earning trends between 2005 to 2015, it appears that Canada has made no progress in closing racist earning gaps. Overall, the earning gap has stayed the same since 2006 (Block et al., 2017).

East Asians do not experience poverty due to their economic and financial success.



In 2011, the overall poverty rate in Canada was 11%. For racialized people, it was 22%, compared to 9% for White Canadians. Of those racialized people living in poverty, 24% were Chinese (Fleras, 2017).

All women are equally impacted by gendered wage gaps.



On average, racialized women make 33% less than non-racialized men, earning 67 cents to every dollar they make. These numbers are different for non-racialized women, Indigenous women, and newcomer women. (Canada Women's Foundation, 2018)

We must challenge model minority myths. We hope that this resource taught you more about Asian employment myths and facts.

To learn more, go to <https://act2endracism.ca>

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