

Women can't jump? –

An experiment on competitive attitudes and stereotype threat

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Abstract:

Gneezy et al. (2003) offer a partial explanation for the wage gap between men and women. In an experiment they found that women react less to competitive incentives. The task they used can however be considered a male task. We replicate the experiment and extend it by a treatment with a gender neutral task and a “female” task. For the male task we replicate their results, but for the neutral task women react as strongly to incentives than men and for the female task women react stronger than men to incentives. Our findings suggest a stereotype threat explanation. Women tend not to compete with men in areas where they (rightly or wrongly) think that they will lose anyway – and the same holds for men.

Keywords: Gender differences, competition, stereotype threat

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