

ECON 460: Women, Work, and the World Economy

Reading Guide: “Do Women Shy Away from Competition? Do Men Compete Too Much?”

This article is neither long nor overly technical, so you should be able to read it straight through. Read the article, and then answer the following questions:

1. What is Professor Niederle and Professor Vesterlund’s main hypothesis?
2. What are the four possible explanations that the authors put forward to explain the existence of gender gaps in the willingness to compete?
3. What task do Professors Niederle and Vesterlund ask experimental subjects to complete?
4. Where do the authors conduct their lab experiment? How large is their sample?
5. How are experimental subjects compensated for their effort? What are the four different compensation schemes used in the experiment?
6. How large are the gender differences in performance observed in the experiment?
7. Are men and women equally likely to choose the tournament-based compensation scheme?
8. To what extent does performance (on the task) predict tournament entry for men and women?
9. Do men enter the tournament too much or too little? What about women?
10. Are men overconfident?
11. Are women overconfident or underconfident?
12. What explains the decision to enter the tournament?