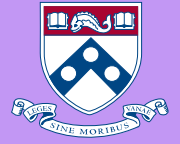




Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Inspiring Women to Compete

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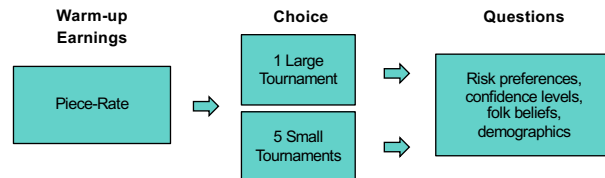
Introduction

- Despite efforts to realize gender equality over the past few decades, the wage gap and underrepresentation of women in top workplace positions remain nearly universal.^{1,2}
- Gender differences in competitiveness have been proposed as an explanatory factor since, on average, women compete less compared to equally capable men.
 - Most job hiring and promotion practices are competitive.
 - Competitiveness predicts greater labor market earnings.³
- Prior studies have examined choices between piece-rate payments versus payment based on success in a competition.
- Competitions are inherently riskier (i.e., greater variance in returns) than payment based on individual performance.
- And, differences in competitiveness are partly explained by risk preferences, where women tend to be more risk-averse.⁴
- We examined whether lowering the risks associated with competing would encourage women to compete.
- We provided participants with the choice to either enter multiple, small competitions (less risky) versus a single large competition (more risky).
- Hypothesis:** Compared to men, a greater proportion of women would choose to compete in the lower-risk option.

Methods

- $N = 464$ adults were recruited on Amazon MTurk.

Figure 1: Experimental Design

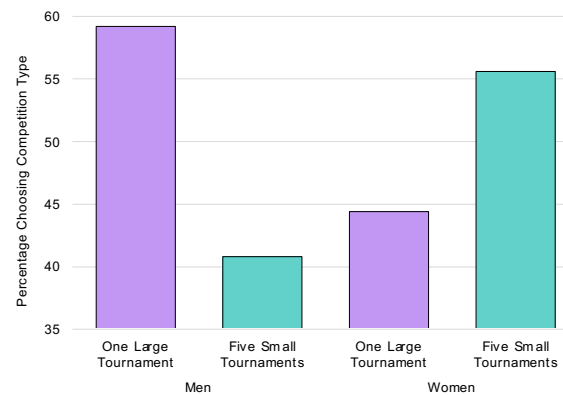


- Participants were allotted a fixed amount of time to solve as many multiplication problems as possible.
- Baseline performance was first measured using a piece-rate scheme (subjects were paid 5¢ per correct answer).
- DV:** Subjects were asked which type of competition they would like to enter, where their payment would be based on their performance *relative* to an opponent.
 - High-risk:** 1 Large Tournament (100 seconds)
 - Winner paid 10¢ per correct answer, loser paid \$0
 - Low-risk:** 5 Small Tournaments (20 seconds per tournament)
 - Within each round: Winner paid 10¢ per correct answer, loser paid \$0

- Participants were (accurately) informed that their opponent was a randomly-paired participant completing the same task.
- Risk preferences were self-reported, ranging from 1 (*Not at all willing to take risks*) to 10 (*Very willing to take risks*).
- Confidence was calculated as (estimate of one's own performance) minus (estimate of opponent's performance).

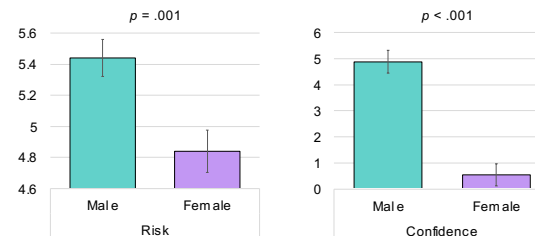
Results

Figure 2: Relationship between gender and competition choice



- We found a main effect of gender ($p < .001$) on the type of competition chosen. Men preferred 1 Large Tournament and women preferred 5 Small Tournaments.
- Risk-aversion positively predicted the preference for multiple tournaments, but the gender difference in choice remained after controlling for demographic and psychological variables.

Figure 3: Risk preferences and confidence levels by gender



- On average, women reported significantly greater risk aversion ($t = 3.326, p = .001$) and less confidence in their task performance ($t = 7.101, p < .001$) than men.

Figure 4: Male Participants' Folk Beliefs

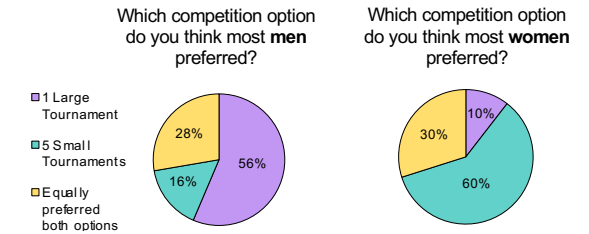
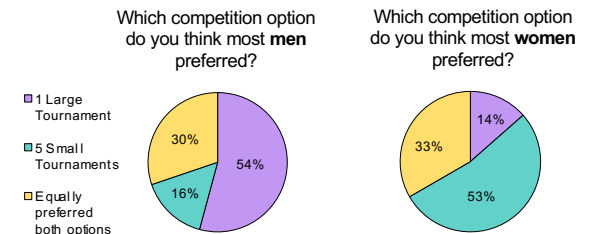


Figure 5: Female Participants' Folk Beliefs



Discussion

- Gender was a significant predictor of competition choice. Women preferred the lower risk, many competition option while men preferred the single competition.
- Participants of both genders predicted that most men would prefer the 1 Large Tournament option, and most women the 5 Small Tournaments option.
- As expected, risk-averse participants were more likely to select the 5 Small Tournaments option.
 - This suggests that the 5 Small Tournaments option lowered the perceived risks associated with competing.
- Companies may want to consider offering multiple, smaller competitions in place of fewer large competitions to encourage women to compete more.

References and Acknowledgements

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