

K6.3 The effect of motivation and feedback

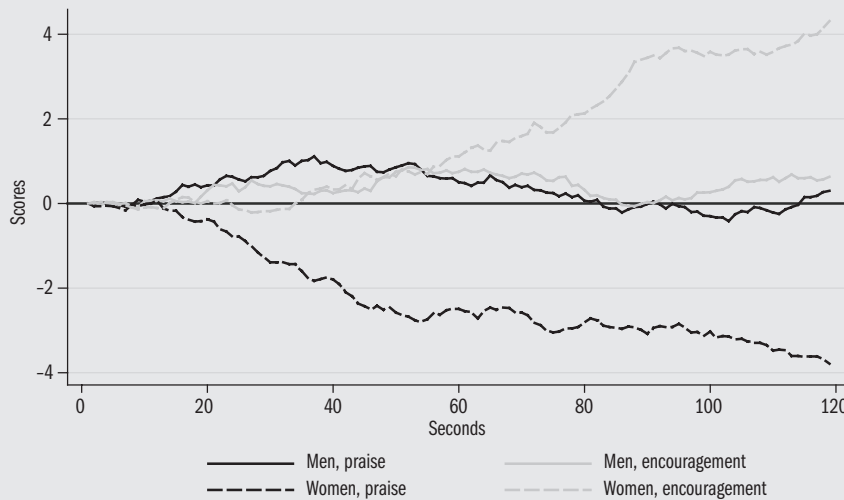
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Gender related differences in school and work performance may partly be explained by the differences in non-cognitive characteristics between the genders (for example men tend to have greater self-confidence and be more competitive) and that the conditions and rules of a given environment (such as the labour market) favour men because of the attributes characteristic of them (for example those with more self-confidence are more successful at wage negotiations and those who like to compete are more likely to be promoted) (Niederle, 2016).

A recent study (Lovász et al. 2017) explored whether encouragement ('You can do it') or praise ('Well done!') affect performance differently, de-

pending on gender. In an online game, individuals were randomly assigned to a control group (did not get encouragement or praise) or a treatment group (got encouragement or praise). *Figure K6.3.1* presents the differences in the average scores of the treatment and control groups during the game. Women were affected more strongly by both encouragement (positively) and praise (negatively) than men. These effects are strongly related to the lower self-confidence of women: men with low self-confidence were influenced by both treatments similarly to women. This suggests that individualised, subjective feedback may increase the performance of certain (less confident) groups, especially of women, during certain tasks.

Figure K6.3.1: The impact of praise and encouragement according to gender – difference in scores between the treatment and control groups during the game



References

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