

New research finds women don't like to participate in competitive situations when deciding for themselves

July 27 2022



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Although most decisions in life are made by individuals themselves, many are influenced by others such as principals, managers, parents or colleagues. New research in the journal *Management Science* finds that women take part in competitive environments more when they are making decisions for other people rather than themselves.

"We find that women shy away from competitive environments more than men when deciding for themselves, only 35% of women choose to compete compared to 56% of men. But, when choosing for others, more women compete, resulting in an equal representation of men and [women](#)," says Helena Fornwagner of the University of Regensburg and University of Exeter.

The study, "Choosing Competition on Behalf of Someone Else," conducted by Fornwagner alongside, Nina Serdarevic of the Centre for Applied Research, FAIR Insight Team, and Monika Pompeo of the University of Bologna, finds that despite these results, this comes at the cost of fewer payoff-maximizing outcomes than when individuals decide for themselves.

"Gender plays an essential role in most labor market decisions, particularly those relating to the willingness to compete. Nonetheless, when making competitive decisions on behalf of others, we show that [gender](#) does not matter; neither the gender of the person deciding nor the person one is deciding for," concludes Fornwagner.

More information: Helena Fornwagner et al, Choosing Competition

on Behalf of Someone Else, *Management Science* (2022). [DOI: 10.1287/mnsc.2022.4413](https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2022.4413)

Provided by Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences

Citation: New research finds women don't like to participate in competitive situations when deciding for themselves (2022, July 27) retrieved 22 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-07-women-dont-competitive-situations.html>

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