

Does being confident matter equally for women and men?

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Abstract

Extending research on the gender gap in confidence, we consider whether the economic return of being self-confident is gendered. Analyzing data from Statistics Canada's 2016 General Social Survey (N= 19,294), we find that not only are women less self-assured than men, the earning power of being confident is also less strong among women than men. In other words, men receive extra economic for being self-confident than what should be observed in a non-discriminatory world.

Proposition

Gender moderates the impact of self-confidence on personal income, and the economic return to being self-confident is lower among women than men.

Background

Self-confidence predicts wages. Self-confidence encourages an individual's beliefs in his or her ability to perform well whereas a shortage of self-confidence can act as a constraint that impairs performance and curtails the growth aspirations of high-level workers (Keller, 2010).

Gender inequality persists. Women and men are rewarded unequally for their similar achievements and traits (Chevalier, 2003). Such subtle bias contributes to the persistence of categorical inequality between the genders.

Gender gap in confidence and gender gap in wages. Women are relatively less self-confident compared to men (Sears, 2010). The female deficit of self-confidence can help explain the wage gap.



Statistics
Canada

Data

General Social Survey: *Canadians at Work and Home* (2016, N=19,294). This survey provides information on the every day behaviours of Canadians aged 15 years and older which shape their life choices and well-being at work and home.

Results

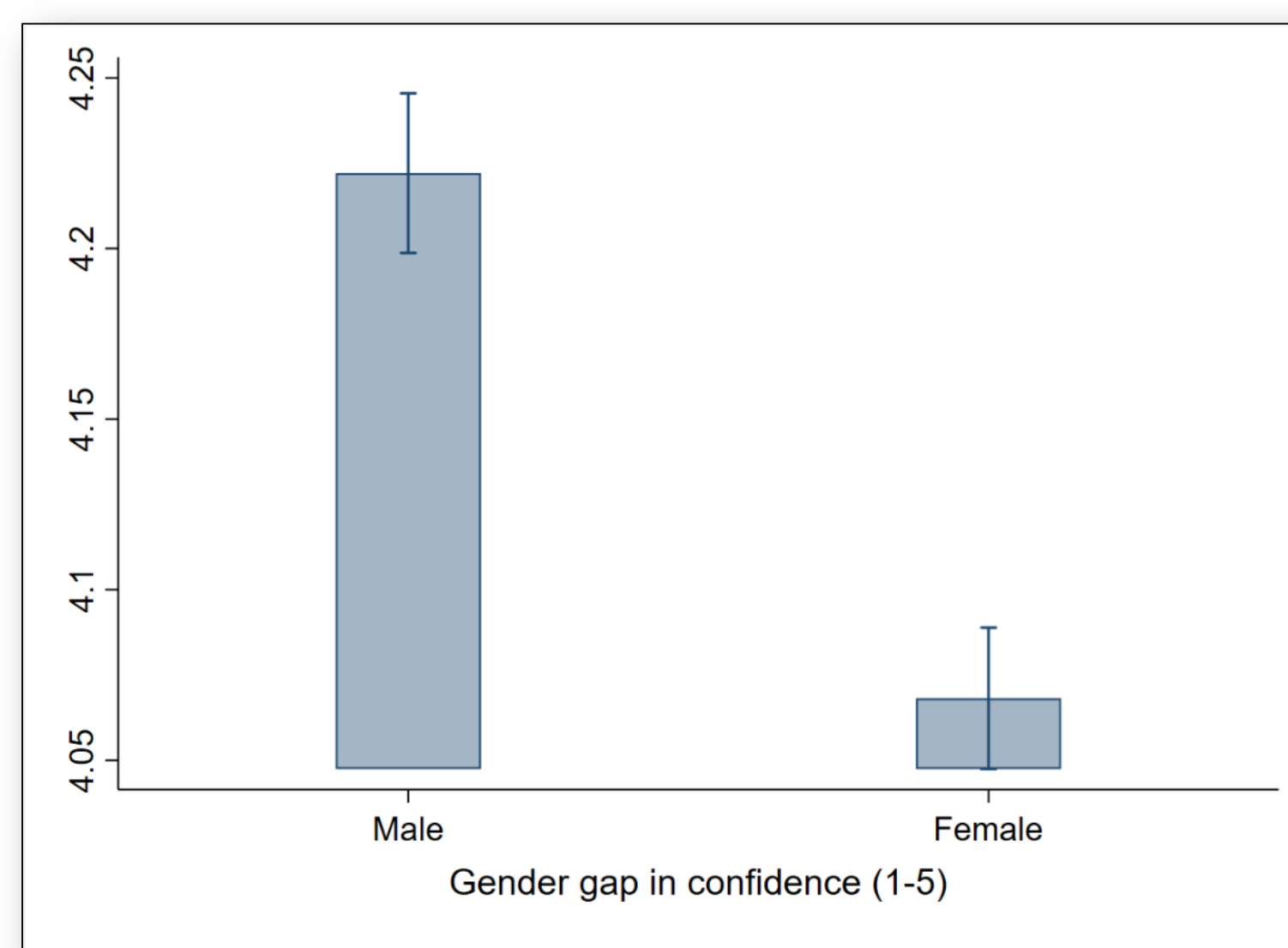


Figure 1 Gender gap in self-confidence

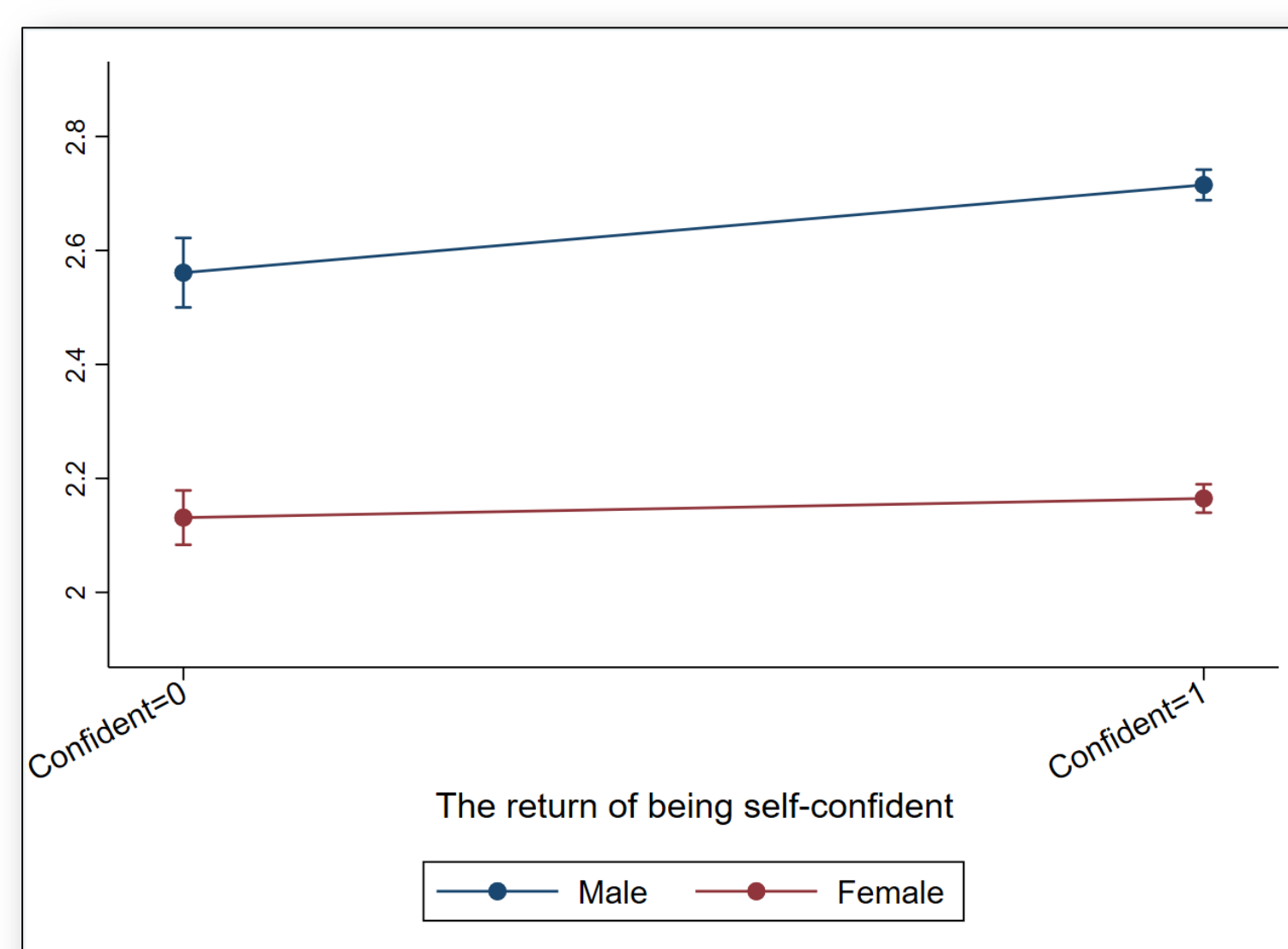


Figure 2 Gendered economic return to being self-confident

Conclusion

The fact that being self-confident is rewarded unequally between the genders demonstrates that social bias against women is one major source for women's lack of self-confidence. If left unaddressed, the unequal economic return of self-confidence will continue to obstruct the movement toward equal pay for equal work and subject women to accepting their underestimation as a natural dimension of personal and community life.