

Appendix to:

Gender and Selection into Self-Improvement Contracts

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This document presents supplementary analysis in support to the main paper, as well as experiment instructions.

Assumption on the construction of types

In the main text we note that the correspondence between Option A in Part 2 and the sure payment of X in Part 3 of the experiment rests on the assumption that in Part 2 the participant is certain that she can obtain at least the same number of correct answers as she obtained in Part 1. This assumption is most likely to hold for participants who report that they expect to solve in Part 2 a larger number of sums or anagrams than those solved in Part 1. We see that 63% of participants in the self-improvement sessions hold such beliefs for the sums task, while 38% of participants in the self-improvement sessions hold such beliefs for the anagrams task. Restricting the analysis to these individuals finds that among men, 10% of participants are classified as self-improvement-averse, 26% as self-improvement seeking, and 64% as consistent. Among women, 26% are classified as self-improvement-averse, 23% as self-improvement-seeking, and 51% as consistent. Thus, among this subset of participants, women tend to be self-improvement averse in larger proportion and consistent in smaller proportion than men, although the difference in distributions is only marginally significant (χ^2 test p-value = 0.106).

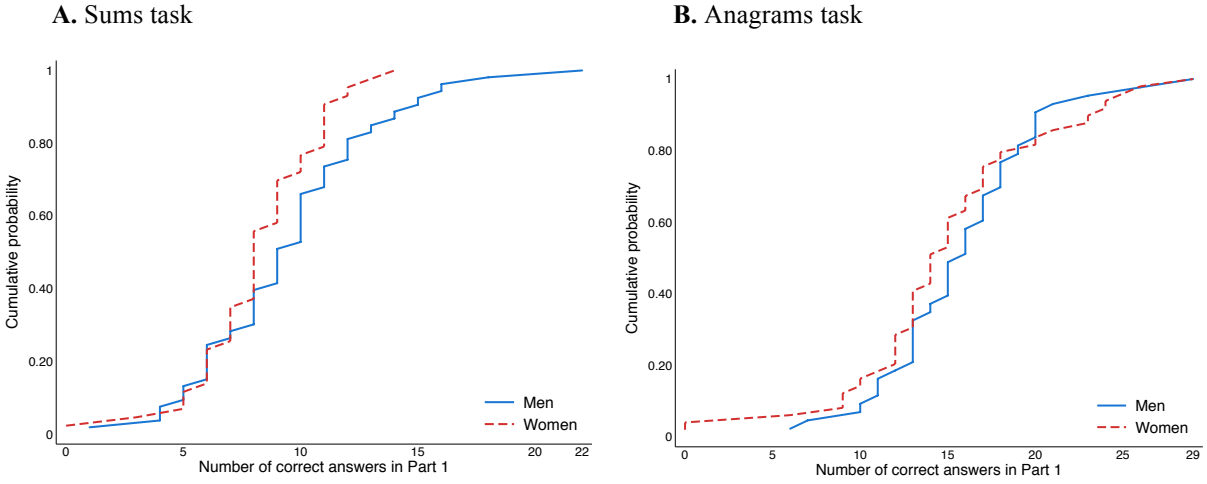


Figure A1: Cumulative distribution of performance in Part 1 for self-improvement sessions

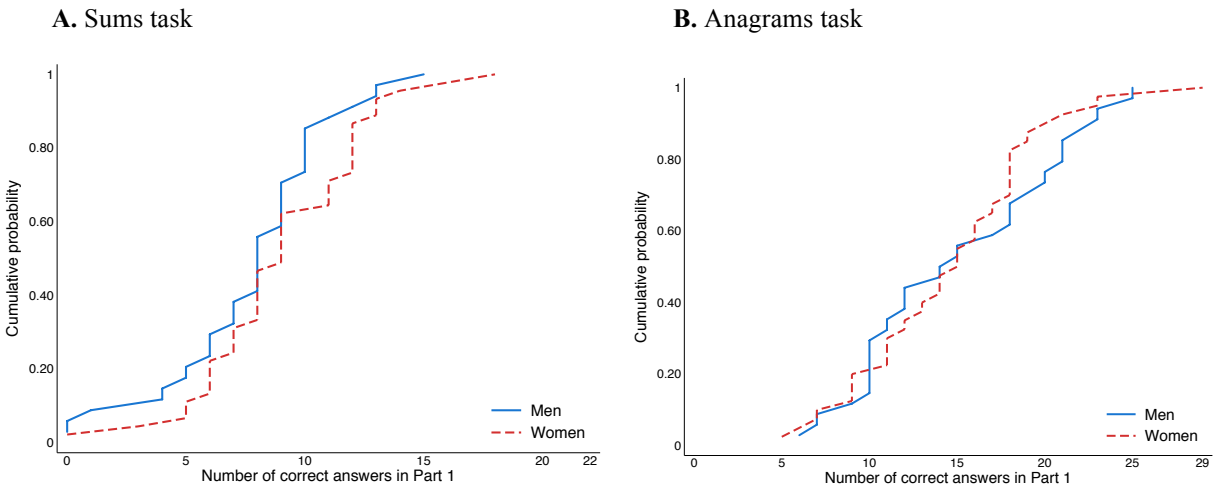


Figure A2: Cumulative distribution of performance in Part 1 for competition sessions

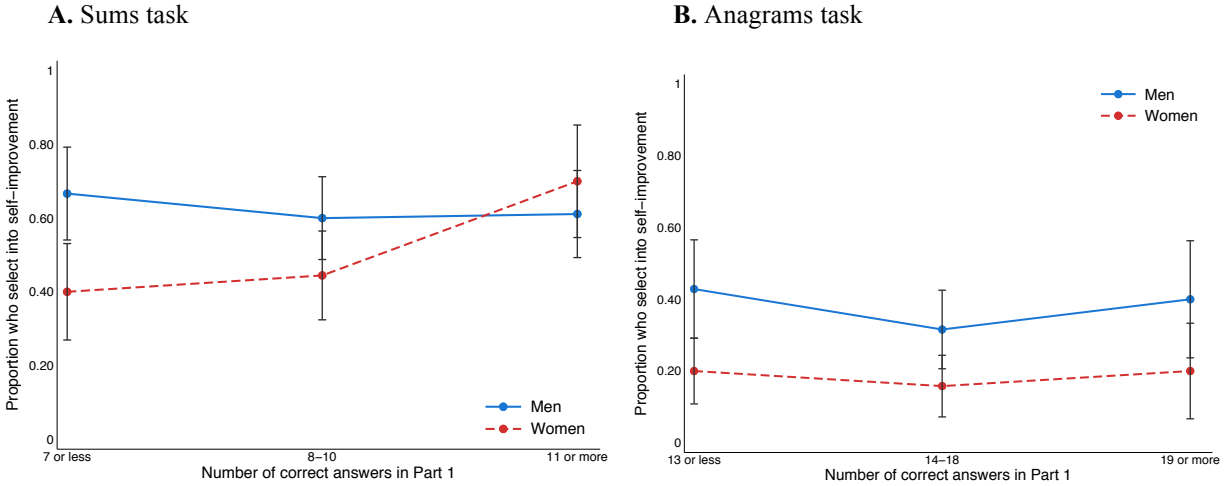


Figure A3: Selection into self-improvement by level of performance in Part 1. Each performance bin collects approximately a third of the observations. Proportions are the fraction of participants within the ability bin that select into the self-improvement contract. Error bars show the fraction plus or minus the standard error of the mean.

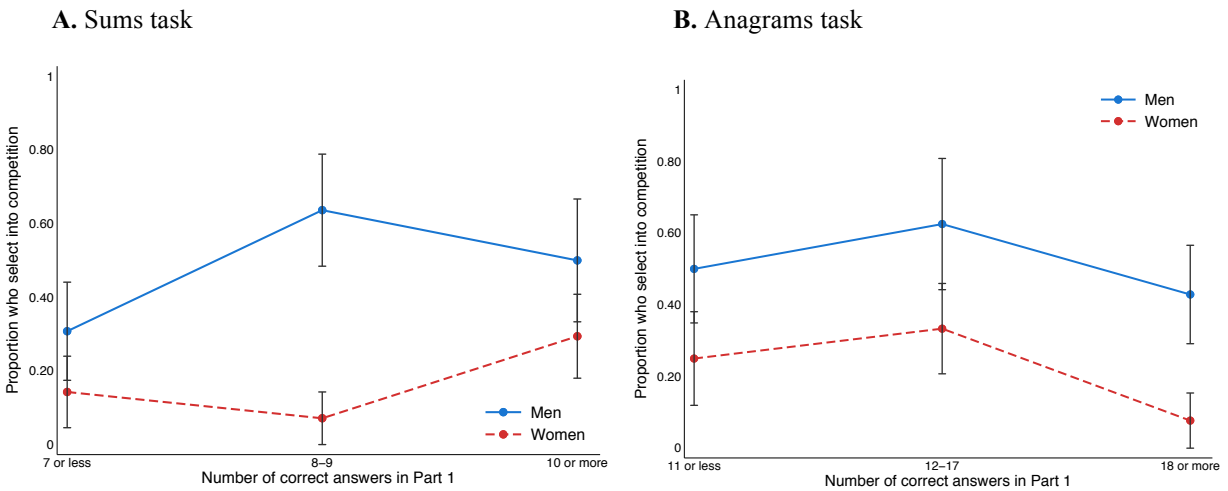


Figure A4: Selection into competition by level of performance in Part 1. Each performance bin collects approximately a third of the observations. Proportions are the fraction of participants within the ability bin that select into the competition contract. Error bars show the fraction plus or minus the standard error of the mean.

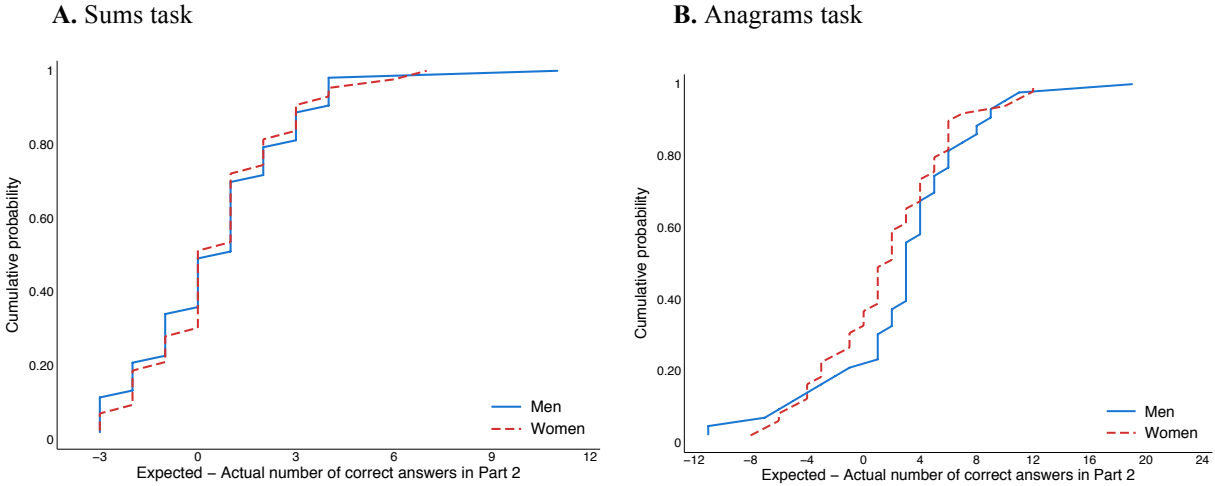


Figure A5: Cumulative distribution of the difference between the participant’s expected performance in Part 2 and her actual performance in Part 2, for self-improvement sessions.

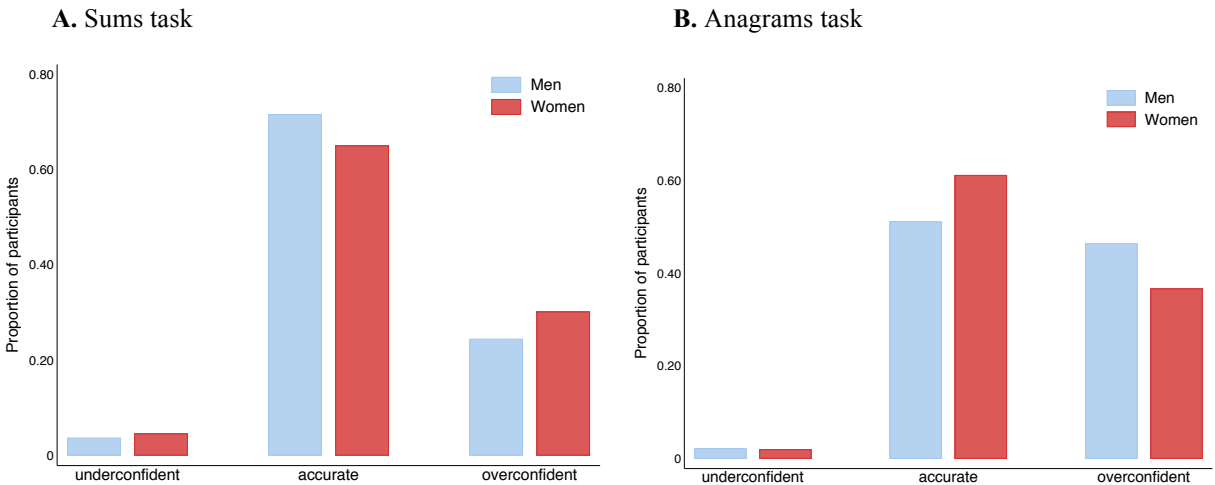


Figure A6: Distribution of types based on accuracy of beliefs about the probability of improving Part-2 performance relative to Part 1. “Underconfident” refers to participants who state a probability of improving smaller than 50% but actually improved their performance; “Overconfident” refers to participants who state a probability of improving larger than 50% but actually did not improve their performance; “Accurate” refers to all other participants.

Table A1: Probability of selecting into self-improvement of competition contract

	Baseline			Full		
	(1)			(2)		
	Sums	Anagrams	Overall	Sums	Anagrams	Overall
Female	-0.342** (0.140)	-0.575** (0.235)	-0.459*** (0.125)	-0.132 (0.201)	0.312 (0.380)	-0.248 (0.197)
Competition	-0.386** (0.176)	-0.326 (0.212)	-0.044 (0.148)	0.273 (0.183)	0.355 (0.220)	0.005 (0.146)
Female* Competition	-0.508*** (0.194)	-0.180 (0.326)	-0.361* (0.188)	-0.414* (0.245)	-0.152 (0.337)	-0.253 (0.218)
Number of correct answers in Part 1				0.011 (0.035)	-0.027 (0.028)	-0.015 (0.021)
Belief improve / beat opponent				0.010** (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)	0.008** (0.004)
Chose risky option				0.581*** (0.209)	0.441** (0.223)	0.505*** (0.151)
Ambiguity switch point				-0.025 (0.030)	0.027* (0.016)	0.000 (0.018)
Agrees with per- ceived femaleness				0.296 (0.344)	0.238 (0.325)	0.226 (0.217)
Female*agrees femaleness				-0.477 (0.357)	-0.395 (0.491)	-0.406 (0.282)
Pseudo R ²	0.090	0.056	0.068	0.157	0.092	0.113
N	175	166	341	175	166	341

Notes: Values are coefficient estimates from probit regressions. *Sums* and *Anagrams* columns present task-specific regressions, while *Overall* columns present regressions pooling both tasks. *Overall* regression control in addition for a task indicator. Standard errors clustered at the session level in parentheses. *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Table A2: Participant’s believed probability of improving in Part 2 relative to Part 1

	Sums task		Anagrams task	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agrees with average perceived femaleness	63.72 (5.81)	60.32 (7.045)	63.14 (4.96)	54.69 (2.09)
Disagrees with average perceived femaleness	68.80 (4.12)	68.32 (3.46)	49.83 (4.08)	61.77 (3.71)
P-value of the column difference	0.535	0.358	0.019	0.188
N	96		92	

Notes: Values are predictions from OLS regressions that control for the number of correct answers the participant obtained in Part 1, the gender of the participant, an indicator of agreement with the average perceived femaleness of the task (this indicator equals “1” if the participant believes that men give a slightly/somewhat/substantially larger number of correct answers than women on the sums task, or that women give a slightly/somewhat/substantially larger number of correct answers than men on the anagrams task, and equals “0” otherwise) and the interaction of the two. Sample restricted to participants from self-improvement sessions. Standard errors clustered at the session level in parentheses.

Table A3: Participant’s expected number of correct answers in Part 2

	Sums task		Anagrams task	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agrees with average perceived femaleness	10.698 (1.640)	10.101 (0.425)	15.178 (0.799)	13.241 (0.575)
Disagrees with average perceived femaleness	9.721 (0.588)	9.671 (0.259)	14.908 (1.275)	12.867 (0.074)
P-value of the column difference	0.647	0.463	0.817	0.532
N	78		74	

Notes: Values are predictions from OLS regressions that control for the number of correct answers the participant obtained in Part 1, the gender of the participant, an indicator of agreement with the average perceived femaleness of the task (this indicator equals “1” if the participant believes that men give a slightly/somewhat/substantially larger number of correct answers than women on the sums task, or that women give a slightly/somewhat/substantially larger number of correct answers than men on the anagrams task, and equals “0” otherwise) and the interaction of the two. Sample restricted to participants from competition sessions. One observation excluded from a participant who stated an expected number of correct answers in the sums task of 1250. Standard errors clustered at the session level in parentheses.

Table A4: Participant’s believed probability of beating a random opponent in Part 2

	Sums task		Anagrams task	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agrees with average perceived femaleness	69.61 (3.52)	43.41 (6.47)	54.22 (4.68)	53.63 (3.01)
Disagrees with average perceived femaleness	58.44 (3.76)	48.54 (2.71)	58.90 (8.13)	48.20 (3.43)
P-value of the column difference	0.056	0.421	0.672	0.220
N	79		74	

Notes: Values are predictions from OLS regressions that control for the number of correct answers the participant obtained in Part 1, the gender of the participant, an indicator of agreement with the average perceived femaleness of the task (this indicator equals “1” if the participant believes that men give a slightly/somewhat/substantially larger number of correct answers than women on the sums task, or that women give a slightly/somewhat/substantially larger number of correct answers than men on the anagrams task, and equals “0” otherwise) and the interaction of the two. Sample restricted to participants from competition sessions. Standard errors clustered at the session level in parentheses.

Table A5: Probability of falling into types, constructed by comparing the participants’ willingness to select into the self-improvement contract in Part 2, and their willingness to make a similar bet in Part 3 that does not require a need to self-improve

	Self-improvement		Competition	
	Averse	Seeking	Averse	Seeking
Female	0.100 (0.207)	-0.069 (0.304)	0.467 (0.398)	-0.785*** (0.195)
Number of correct answers in Part 1	-0.012 (0.024)	-0.005 (0.025)	0.005 (0.038)	0.071* (0.039)
Expected improvement in number of correct answers	-0.061 (0.085)	0.175** (0.068)	0.036*** (0.009)	-0.000 (0.011)
Ambiguity switch point	0.019 (0.036)	-0.015 (0.036)	-0.026 (0.047)	-0.011 (0.034)
N	188		153	

Notes: Values are coefficient estimates from multinomial probit regressions, where the *consistent* type is the reference outcome. Standard errors clustered at the session level in parentheses. *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.