



## Status Anxiety Makes Women Underperform

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Little is known about how status uncertainty affects men and women. Anticipating that one's status will be revealed can raise anxiety and affect performance. We provide experimental evidence on behavior by men and women who are informed that their performance will be used to create a status ranking. We find that in anticipation of ranking women perform more poorly than men while there is no performance difference without status ranking. This is important because recent studies argue that women may be underrepresented in top positions because they shy away from competition, and that increasing women's willingness to compete could improve their position. In contrast, our results suggest that increased participation in competitive environments could harm women's labor market success. We thus highlight an overlooked impediment for workplace promotion of women that may have major implications for the design of labor market competitions.