

Equal pay for equal task. Assessing heterogeneous returns to tasks across genders

Elizabeth J. Casabianca ^{*} Alessia Lo Turco [†] Claudia Pignini [‡]

Abstract

We explore the existence of gender differences in returns to motor, cognitive and social tasks by using individual level data for a sample of U.S. workers. We uncover in this data a wage premium for women performing highly manual or highly cognitive jobs, after finding no evidence of cross-occupation correlation between task returns nor of self-selection of workers according to their comparative advantages, that would otherwise threaten the identification of average task returns in the labour market. Furthermore, a wage penalty characterizes women engaged in highly social intensive jobs. These results hold both across- and within-occupations as well as when we control for within-industry effects.

KEYWORDS: Task approach, Gender-specific task returns, motor-cognitive-social tasks.

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^{*}Prometeia, Università Politecnica delle Marche (IT) - elizabeth.casabianca@prometeia.com

[†]Università Politecnica delle Marche (IT) - a.loturco@univpm.it

[‡]Università Politecnica delle Marche (IT) - c.pigini@univpm.it