

ABSTRACT

Previous research on gender differences in behavior has led to seemingly contradictory findings. While some authors report that women are more generous than men, others report the opposite relative patterns of behavior. From data generated by 202 subject pairs, we find that women are more sensitive than men to the costs of generous actions when deciding whether or not to be generous. The factors that affect the level of generosity observed in our experiments are reciprocal motivation, the level of money payoffs, and the level of social distance in the experimental protocol. The relatively greater sensitivity of women to the costs of generous behavior can explain some of the apparent inconsistencies of previously-reported findings.