

Gender Differences in Wealth at Retirement

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The proposed research studies the wealth accumulation of older Americans, focusing on gender differences. Specifically, we examine whether risk preferences play any role in the gender gap in wealth. Previous research has suggested that women tend to be more risk averse than men and to invest their retirement assets more conservatively than men. If this is indeed the case, overly conservative investments can lead to low levels of wealth accumulation and may account for the gender gap in wealth.

As for policy implications, this study was partly motivated by the concern for economic hardship experienced by female-headed households. As economic climate in the U.S. makes individuals increasingly responsible for their older-age financial security, this particular population may become more at risk. Although the study does not directly address child-related issues, it can tackle the wealth disparity issues associated with gender and family types.