

Physical Attractiveness, Gender and the Evaluation of Teaching

A Replication Study of Hamermesh's and Parker's (2005) and Klein's and Rosar's (2006) Findings Analyzing Individual Data

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Abstract

The paper picks up the intensively discussed issue of potential biases on students' evaluations of university teaching. Based on studies of Hamermesh/Parker (2005) and Klein/Rosar (2006) the influence of a largely disregarded factor, the attractiveness of the teaching staff on the evaluation results, is in the analytical focus. As well, so far in this context extensively neglected cross-gender effects and their interaction with the teachers' attractiveness are accounted for. In order to test these hypotheses deduced from a theoretical model individual data are analyzed with ordered logit multilevel regression models. Despite the use of different methods, existing findings can be largely replicated. On average, students especially evaluate attractive male teachers' quality of teaching significantly better. However, the results are sensitive towards different model specifications. Implications of these results for theory, methodology and higher education policy are discussed.

Keywords: Student Ratings, Attractiveness, Multilevel Models, Ordinal Variables



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