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Gender achievement gaps among Chinese middle school students and the role of teachers’ gender

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ABSTRACT

Based on a nationally representative data of middle school students from China, this paper intends to document gender performance gaps among middle school students in China and the role of teachers. gender in either reducing or perpetuating such gaps. We find substantial gender academic achievement gaps in favor of girls in all of the three main subject areas, although the sizes of the gaps are substantially smaller in math than in literacy. Exploiting the fact that middle school students in China are randomly assigned to classes, we then examine the impact of student-teacher gender match not only on academic performance, but also on students. self-perceived ability in each subject area and self-perceived interactions with the teacher teaching that subject. Our results suggest that teacher gender has little impact on boys. In contrast, having a female teacher noticeably improves girls. self-reported student-teacher interactions, self-perceived ability, and academic performance, although the effect is only robust and persists over time in the subject of math.

1. Introduction

human capital investment, confidence, and performance (Bian, Leslie, &

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