

Tenure Track System and Its Impact on Grading Leniency and Student Effort: A Quasi-Experimental Approach

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Abstract : This paper examines the causal effect of the tenure track system on instructors' grading practices and teaching effectiveness by taking advantage of a natural experiment in Taiwan. The results show that assistant professors subject to the tenure track policy are more likely to grade leniently and fail fewer students. The course grade is 5% higher in classes taught by assistant professors subject to the tenure system. However, the tendency to grade leniently is reversed after assistant professors subject to the tenure system are promoted to a higher rank. Our findings are consistent with the exchange theory. We also show that teaching and student efforts are adversely affected by the tenure policy, which could reduce student learning and the quality of the workforce in the long run.

Keywords : tenure track system, grading leniency, study time, grade inflation

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