Better Than Most: Teacher Self-Beliefs in Uganda

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(with James Habyarimana and Kanishka Kacker)
Of the 116 countries for which data is available:

- 20 spend more than 90% of funding on staff
- 47 spend more than 80%
- 83 spend more than 70%
- 105 spend more than 60%
## Teacher effort is low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Official Time</th>
<th>Presence Time</th>
<th>Time on Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>Lebanon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria*</td>
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<td>Pernambuco (Brazil)</td>
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<td>Kenya</td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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<td>Tanzania (2014)</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
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</table>
Do teachers believe their effort is low*?

*: in the sense that there are margins to increase it
Teacher effort is low
How do teachers perceive their effort?
A survey experiment
Teachers have unrealistically positive perceptions of their effort
Survey experiment
Uganda
350 secondary teachers
Public Private Partnership (PPP) schools
Randomized

Self-Perception group

Social-Perception group
Contrast how teachers see themselves with how they see other teachers in the school.
Self Perception > Social Perception → High Relative Self Regard (HRS)
Outcome_i = \alpha + \rho \times TREATMENT_i + \delta X_i + \varepsilon_i
No clear differences in perceptions of available support structures
No clear differences in perceptions of student engagement

- Teachers have a good relationship with students
- Teachers can do more if parents take interest in children
- Cannot discipline students if they are not disciplined at home
- Teachers would like more involvement in setting learning goals
- Hardest challenge for me is to motivate students

Domain 4 Index
Self-ratings significantly higher for Job Satisfaction

No Controls Including Control
Satisfied with current job
Happy with Career Prospects
Satisfied with current Salary
Satisfied with current Benefits
Like greater job security
Would not change current job given the opportunity
Domain Index
Self-ratings significantly higher for Ability & Effort

-0.1
-0.2
-0.3
-0.4
-0.5
-0.6
-0.7

0
-0.05
-0.04
-0.07
-0.07
-0.10
-0.09
-0.09
-0.17
-0.17
-0.07
-0.07
-0.39
-0.38

No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control
No Controls Including Control

Able to teach all topics to even the most problematic students
Confident in teaching all topics in subject
Changes teaching method at least once a month
Maintain composure when student becomes disruptive
Believes absence from school acceptable
Student's learning achievement motivates teacher
Domain 2 Index
Illusory Superiority
Better Than Average Effect
Lake Woebegone

Consistent with Social Psychology
Low-effort teachers more likely to exhibit HRS
Teachers in owner-managed schools less likely to exhibit HRS

- Treatment X Own
  - Domain 2 Index
  - Own = Head-teacher is owner
  - Treatment: -0.59
  - Treatment X Own: 0.44

- Treatment X BOwn
  - Domain 2 Index
  - Own = Board of Governors is owner
  - Treatment: -0.52
  - Treatment X BOwn: 0.01
Why might it matter?
1. Barriers to incentive & accountability approaches

   *Self-perception theory*

   *Role of rationalization*

2. Importance of objective feedback