

# Opponent's Report on Dissertation Thesis

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Title of the Thesis:	Three Essays on the Economics of Education
Type of Defense:	<b>DEFENSE</b>
Date of Pre-Defense:	February 15, 2023
Opponent:	doc. Ing. Jan Janků Ph.D. (Technická Univerzita Ostrava)

Address the following questions in your report, please:

- a) Can you recognize an original contribution of the author?
- b) Is the thesis based on relevant references?
- c) Is the thesis defensible at your home institution or another respected institution where you gave lectures?
- d) Do the results of the thesis allow their publication in a respected economic journal?
- e) Are there any additional major comments on what should be improved?
- f) What is your overall assessment of the thesis? (a) I recommend the thesis for defense without substantial changes, (b) the thesis can be defended after revision indicated in my comments, (c) not-defensible in this form.

*(Note: The report should be at least 2 pages long.)*

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**a) Can you recognize an original contribution of the author?**

Yes, indeed, the scholarly merit of this work is underscored by the prior publication of two of its chapters in esteemed academic periodicals: the Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, and the Review of Economics and Statistics. For the third part of the thesis (Chapter 4), I see the potential for it to be published in a top-tier economics journal. This chapter has seen some changes since the pre-defense, and I believe these changes are moving it in the right direction.

**b) Is the thesis based on relevant references?**

Yes, it is, I perceive no issues with author's management of the bibliographic citations. All pertinent sources are accurately referenced, and author makes extensive references to a substantial body of the most recent literature.

c) **Is the thesis defensible at your home institution or another respected institution where you gave lectures?**

The dissertation, unquestionably, meets the rigorous standards for defense at the university where I lecture. Moreover, I think that this thesis would withstand scrutiny and be defensible at the majority of esteemed European academic institutions.

d) **Do the results of the thesis allow their publication in a respected economic journal?**

This inquiry has already been addressed earlier, as emphasized, two of the chapters have been previously published. The final chapter (chapter 4) holds potential for publication.

e) **Are there any additional major comments on what should be improved?**

At this stage, it would be redundant to provide recommendations for the first two chapters, given that they have already been successfully published and I see no need for substantial alterations. I have already made some remarks in the review for the pre-defense, which were largely discussive in nature - anyone interested can find my notes on the dissertation in the review for the pre-defense. My queries regarding the first two papers have been sufficiently addressed in the author's responses. Regarding the third chapter, I provided more detailed feedback during the pre-defense, and this chapter has since seen some desired changes implemented. **For these reasons, my comments below pertain solely to the third paper (the fourth chapter of the thesis).**

The entire dissertation has undergone minor revisions in the introduction, which I appreciate. The author efficiently encapsulates her research here, uniting it under the theme of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of education. She highlights policies intended to promote the quality and efficiency of education, which in turn, enhance human capital quality, yet these yield unintended consequences in varying contexts.

I appreciate the revised introduction of the fourth chapter. The new paragraph succinctly and clearly summarizing the results is particularly useful for readers. It eases navigation through the paper, providing guidance on what to look for and focus on, as well as setting expectations for the article's content. This has effectively addressed my initial concern, where I found myself uncertain of the paper's focus until I reached the results section. I have a similar feeling about the initial sections of the paper, which I believe have become more understandable. I appreciate that the changes have made the article clearer—it's obvious what the main research question is, and the author straightforwardly approaches it (some misleading information about the study's focus has been removed). I have a minor remark regarding the text here—the use of first-person singular (I, my) and first-person plural (we, our) alternates inconsistently

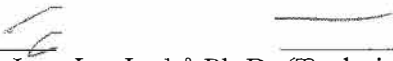
I highly appreciate that the author has added another identification method in the revised version to circumvent the issue of selection bias. As the author notes, the outcome of USE reform might not be comparable among selected individuals. The application of PSM addresses the bias that could affect the estimation of treatment effects on those outcomes. I believe that this approach elevates the article further. The new method is reflected in Table 4.2, Panel C. These results, to my understanding, serve as a robustness check - given that they are quantitatively similar (presumably statistically identical) to the baseline results.

The results of the paper are more thoroughly commented on and clarified in the appropriate section, which is commendable. Now, when reading the text, I naturally understood the difference in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 (salary vs income), whose ambiguity I pointed out in the pre-defense review.

Overall, I can only express my admiration for the author's excellent research to date (as reflected in the first two publications) and for her potential future as a researcher (as indicated by the as-yet-unpublished article in the fourth chapter). Therefore, evaluating this work was both easy and pleasurable for me.

- f) **What is your overall assessment of the thesis? (a) I recommend the thesis for defense without substantial changes, (b) the thesis can be defended after revision indicated in my comments, (c) not-defendable in this form.**

**I recommend the thesis for defense without substantial changes.**

Date:	10.5.2023
Opponent's Signature:	
Opponent's Affiliation:	doc. Ing. Jan Janků Ph.D. (Technická Univerzita Ostrava)