Master Thesis

Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Student:	Martina Lušková
Advisor:	Zuzana Havránková
Title of the thesis:	The Effect of Face Masks on Covid Transmission: a Meta Analysis

***OVERALL ASSESSMENT** (provided in English, Czech, or Slovak):*

Short summary

The present thesis provides a meta-analysis of the studies on the effect of face mask on Covid transmission. Relying on 44 primary studies and on a wide collection of information on them, the author provides some interesting insights on the potential sources of differences in the results observed by the various primary studies considered.

Contribution

The research questions were ambitious and regardless the existance of previous meta-analysis considering the use of face masks as protective equipment, the present thesis has the merit to specifically focus on Covid transmission. Thus, it applies a more rigorous selection of the relevant literature, while also relying on a wide spectrum of methodological approvhes. As a result, it provides better guidance to policy-makers. Moreover, it also offers some insights on the potential drivers explaining the heterogeneity in results of the studies on the effect of face masks on Covid transmission.

Methods

The student performed a careful analysis applying different methodologies and specification. Overall, the student proved to have a good methodological knowledge in adressing the proposed research question.

Literature

The literature review is a a bit unbalanced. The author devotes quite some space to the explanation of the different empirical approaches to evaluate the effect of face masks on Covid transmission. I believe this part could have been shorten or, at least, put in better context discussing some studies that apply the different methods.

Manuscript form

The thesis is very well organized and structued. Overall, the language is appropriate and the text is clear. Tables are presented correctly and always combined with explanatory notes. Bibliography and citations are adequate.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

I believe the present thesis fulfills the formal requirements for a master thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. The student formulated some clear research questions, proved to be familiar with the existing works on the topic and performed a careful empirical analysis contributing to the understanding of the consequences of the use of face masks on the Covid transmission. Overall, the work is well written and presented. The results of the Urkud analysis did not raise any concerns.

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For all these reasons, I believe the thesis is ready for defence and I recommend it for the defence suggesting a grade A.

Question: A limitation of the present work is identified in the impossibility to collect specific controls included in the models of primary studies. Please, elaborate on this and explain what controls ideally you would have wanted to control for and why.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	30
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	28
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	15
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	20
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**93**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Paola Bertoli

DATE OF EVALUATION: *10/06/2023*

Digitally signed (10.06.2023)
Paola Bertoli

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Referee Signature