Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Tereza Markalousová
Advisor:	Prof. PhDr. Tomáš Havránek Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	How Does Peer Socioeconomic Status Affect Academic Achievement? A Meta-Analysis

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

Short summary

The thesis presents a modern meta-analysis of the effect of peers' socioeconomic status on academic achievement (put more simply, how your kid's friends' background influences the education of the kid). The author shows that the correlation is positive across various contexts even after correction for publication bias and other potential biases related to methodology. She also identifies the systematic drivers of the heterogeneity (that is, in which contexts we can expect higher correlations and vice versa). This is an interesting piece of research that could easily pass for an A-ranked master's, not only bachelor's thesis.

Contribution

While a previous meta-analysis has examined this topic, it largely ignored publication bias and didn't use modern meta-analysis methods. This thesis is much more credible, and the value added is scientifically important – it could be published in an impacted journal focusing on education economics. I also stress the amount of work involved here: the author had to collect her own dataset. In a meta-analysis setting, this means that she had to read in detail dozens of papers and collect their results by hand.

Methods

The thesis uses modern methods, none of which is taught at the BA level: p-uniform*, WAAP, endogenous kink, stem-based technique, selection model, Bayesian model averaging, etc. These techniques are correctly applied. I want to point out that the author is careful econometrically: the standard errors are clustered, IV results are interpreted with caution since the instrument is weak, etc. I have no objections to the thesis since the author has communicated with me regularly and implemented all of my suggestions. Well done.

Literature

All relevant papers that I can think of are properly cited.

Manuscript form

The thesis is written in good English and typeset in LaTeX. I see no problems.

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Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

This is a straight A thesis, perfectly executed. Question for thesis defense: could you explain in more detail why the individual specifications of best practice (p. 45) vary so much?

In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor's thesis at the IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A. The results of the plagiarism software analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	28
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	29
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	19
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	20
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**96**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Prof. PhDr. Tomáš Havránek, Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: **7.8.2023**

Digitally signed, Tomas Havranek

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Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

CONTRIBUTION: *The author presents original ideas on the topic demonstrating critical thinking and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and empirics. There is a distinct value added of the thesis.*

METHODS: *The tools used are relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The thesis topic is comprehensively analyzed.*

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

MANUSCRIPT FORM: *The thesis is well structured. The student uses appropriate language and style, including academic format for graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables and disposes with a complete bibliography.*

Overall grading:

TOTAL	GRADE
91 – 100	**A**
81 - 90	**B**
71 - 80	**C**
61 – 70	**D**
51 – 60	**E**
0 – 50	**F**