



### Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Alena Rodikova

Thesis title: The Role Played by Social Media in the Migration-Related Decision-Making Process in the Case of International Students of Charles University

Name of the supervisor: Annamária Neag, D. Phil

Name of the opponent: Mgr. Jitka Wirthová, Ph.D.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable?*

Comments:

The research topic of the three objects (international students, social media and decision-making process) is based first on Migration studies. The author explores and understands these studies very well, aptly focusing them on international students. Then, the author also draws on social media studies and embeds this complex topic in current relevant research. However, the third part of the topic - decision-making in studying abroad – is based on rather outdated literature (Lee, 1966) especially when the author wishes to bring up-to-date findings about social media.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments:

The research problem is very well justified, and the research question clearly follows this problem:

1. *To what extent does social media influence one's decision to study abroad?*

2. *What is the most convenient platform for prospective students to find information about the university and destination country? (p.21)*

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments:

The author uses predominantly relevant literature and backs the research problem with accurately summarised and integrated current research. However, I see the following problems:

- In section: 1.2 Brief History of International Education, it is not clear to me why to refer to Buddhist Nalanda University in Bihar and not the European Medieval University mobility when the case is international students in CZ. The same question can be asked



for the 1951 Colombo Plan for the South-East Asian region and for omitting the EU's Bologna Process.

- Section: 1.5 Phenomena of “Brain Drain” and “Brain Circulation” is based on the policy and management literature mainly from the OECD and European Commission and not on scholarly sociological ones.

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?*

Comments:

The theoretical background of the methods used is rather weak. Strange literature is used for backing the methods of “descriptive study supported by primary data“, “(Research Connections, n.d.)“ (p.21) which is not listed even in the reference list. However, the “two-stage” methodology is relevant and the author described it accurately providing all needed information. 20 semi-structured interviews with international students and two interviews with PR officials of Charles University seem to make up a sound data set but in section 3. Results, the numbers of interviews are stated differently – as 12 in tot. – This must be clarified during the defence!

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments:

The findings are relevant and the author structured them in a comprehensive and instructive way so they add clear pieces to the answer to the research question. The text of this section also indicates the differences to current research, so easily connects to the discussion section.

In the discussion section, arguments are excellently developed in relation to findings and literature. Especially the fact (based on the thesis research) that the influence of social media and personal ties (as was common in literature) are less discernible as social media facilitates these personal ties and vice versa – personal ties influence the use of specific social media. I found this very relevant research finding, although, unfortunately, the summarised argument seems to be rather banal: *In summary, respondents utilized various platforms before and after applying to Charles University. They reported using different mediums depending on what kind of information they needed:* (p.34).

6. *Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?*

Comments: Yes!

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments:

The author provided original research and challenged several myths about the overestimated influence of social media.



8. *What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?*

Comments:

The style and other formal requirements are all right, I only found problematic that some sources are not valid scientific publications:

- Preprint from ResearchGate: Riaño, Y., & Piguet, E. (2016). International Student migration. In Oxford Bibliographies in Geography. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326231413\\_INTERNATIONAL\\_STUDENT\\_MIGRATION\\_-\\_AN\\_ANNOTATED\\_REVIEW](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326231413_INTERNATIONAL_STUDENT_MIGRATION_-_AN_ANNOTATED_REVIEW)
- University Blog post: University of Bolton. (n.d.). Education in the context of Globalisation. Benefits of Globalisation. Bolton.ac.uk. University of Bolton. Retrieved from: <https://www.bolton.ac.uk/blogs/education-in-the-context-of-globalisation-and-how-it-impacts-teachers/>

9. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: Non

10. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments:

- Clarification of the number of interviews
- More elaboration on the “blurred” line between personal ties and social media: *due to the spread of social media, the line between the influence of personal networks and social media platforms is blurred.* (p.40.). Drawing on your research, could you please add some of your insight into this interesting finding and relate it to the fact that social media were not as influential as supposed so far?

11. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system:* [ ] *Theses* [ ] *Turnitin* [ ] *Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result:

Overall assessment of the thesis:

I found this thesis original and high quality despite the problems in some cases of sources and literature. Therefore, I am happy to recommend it for a defence with a proposed grade of B if all discussion issues are properly clarified.

Proposed grade:

B

Date: 4.9.2023

Signature: