



## MASTER THESIS REVIEW

**Type of review:** supervisor's review

**Author:** Veronica Armendariz

**Title:** The effects of the structural inequalities in the tertiary educational system in the rural area in Ecuador.

**Author of review:** Ing. Mgr. Olga Angelovská, Ph.D.

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### *1) Factual benefits of work and its added value*

In her thesis, the author focused on educational inequalities in Ecuador. The topic is relevant to the field of public and social policy. The main contribution of this thesis is addressing a topic important for tertiary education in Ecuador.

### *2) Setting and answering research questions*

The author states the main goal is "to discover the factors that damage the quality of tertiary education in rural areas in Ecuador." (p. 8), and the sub-goal is "to gather updated data about the educational system and to map the current situation of educational inequality in Ecuador." (p.8). The author fulfilled both objectives in the thesis. The author also stated three research questions (p. 8), and she answered all of them.

### *3) Structure of work*

The chapters of the thesis follow each other logically. The text includes an introduction, objectives and research questions, a description of the acute challenges and the Ecuadorian education system itself, a theoretical framework, research methods, two chapters of findings (based on literature and documents review and the interviews), discussion and conclusion.

### *4) The factual accuracy and convincing of the argumentation*



The author offers much interesting and relevant information in the text (e.g. in chapter 6.2). A particular weakness of the text is that the author often jumps from topic to topic, which makes it difficult to follow the main line of the message. In some parts of the text it is not clear what are the author's own conclusions and what is the result of desk research. In terms of argumentation, the author sometimes refers to older sources but cannot argue the information, e.g. information on budget reductions between 2017 and 2020 cited from a 2011 source (pp. 50-51). Sometimes, the author does not complete the argument; see, for example, the information on financial stabilization without specifying what instruments were used (p. 50). Sometimes the author gives interesting information, but she no longer writes what follows (or could follow) from it (see for example illiteracy rate on p. 10).

An interesting chapter is where the author presents the outcomes of the interviews (pp. 52-57). I appreciate that she relates her findings to those of other authors. It would have helped the text if this chapter had also been structured according to the indicators studied.

#### *5) Sophistication and application of theoretical approaches*

The author based her thesis on the Social Marginalization. The concept is relevant to the topic. Nevertheless, the author was rather general in her reflections. Based on the theory, the author established indicators to focus on in her work. I appreciate that she has drawn on the current literature in setting the indicators. Unfortunately, when writing, she missed one substantively similar paragraph on investment based on the same source (namely Berckman 2007); see pages 29 (third paragraph) and 30 (first paragraph), where the author uses identical arguments.

#### *6) Methodological approach and application of particular methods and approaches*

The qualitative approach is the appropriate one concerning the topic. The author works with public policy documents (laws, strategic documents) and the outputs of six interviews. I appreciate the selection of respondents, where the author interviewed ministry and education system representatives. At the same time, however, I miss more work with public policy documents in the analysis itself; the author returns rather to the use of the desk research method. I have three minor comments on the methodology chapter. First, it needs to be clarified why the author refers to a secondary source when working on the Constitution rather than directly to it. Secondly, the text states, but this may just be the result of a rewrite, that the strategic plan is the method, but here it is the document being researched. Third, Table 1 (page 36) states the length of interviews, but it would be better to indicate the length in minutes.



7) *Use of literature and data*

The author based her work on relevant sources and data, given that information on the subject is somewhat limited. I know from consultations with the author that it was problematic to find the necessary information on the topic. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to indicate how the information is available at the international level (e.g. OECD, EU, etc.).

8) *Stylistic and text editing (quote, text layout, etc.).*

The text fulfils the criteria laid on the academic work. However, the work suffers from several editorial shortcomings. The new chapter beginnings do not start on a new page; there is wrong numbering in chapter 6 (the numbering of the first subchapter starts as 6.0), and whole tables are copied again in the list of tables; the first one has the wrong number. The table is titled as the graph (page 18). All figures and table are shown with the original title, which is confusing.

9) *Question for defence (not obligatory)*

1. How would the author define the main barriers that made it difficult for her to process the topic? How could they be addressed or prevented in further research on the topic?

2. The author mentions, "In some cases, interviews may be the most ethical way to collect data "(page 35). Which cases (and why) does the author have in mind?

*I declare that I have read the result of the originality check of the text of the thesis in the system: [ ] Theses [ X ] Turnitin [ ] Ouriginal (Urkund) Comment on the result of the check: no reservations.*

**For the above reasons, I recommend the diploma thesis for the defence and to grade by "C-D".**

Date 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024

Signature: