Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Emily Slorup
Advisor:	Matej Opatrny MSc., Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	Does the Type of School Financing Impact Student erformance? - International Comparison based on PISA Dataset

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

Short summary

Emily Slorup's bachelor thesis investigates the impact of government funding on secondary school performance across 65 countries and regions using PISA data from 2006 to 2018. The study employs a fixed-effects approach to analyze the relationship between government funding and student performance in mathematics, science, and reading. The thesis reveals a non-linear and diminishing effect of government funding on student performance, contributing a nuanced perspective to the existing literature on education finance and outcomes.

Contribution

The thesis makes a significant contribution to the field of education economics by:
1. Providing a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between government funding and student performance on an international scale.
2. Uncovering a non-linear relationship between funding and performance, which offers new insights for policymakers and researchers.

The author's findings challenge simplistic assumptions about the impact of increased government funding on educational outcomes, opening up new avenues for research on optimal funding strategies.

Methods

The methodological approach is sound and well-executed. The author demonstrates a strong understanding of econometric techniques, particularly in the application of fixed-effects models to panel data. The use of various model specifications to examine different funding levels is innovative and provides valuable insights. The author also shows awareness of potential limitations, such as heteroskedasticity and serial correlation, and addresses these issues appropriately.

Literature

The literature review is comprehensive and well-structured. It effectively synthesizes previous research on school financing and performance, identifying key debates and gaps in the literature. The author demonstrates a strong command of relevant studies and theories, providing a solid foundation for the empirical analysis.

Manuscript form

The thesis is well-organized and clearly written. The author presents complex ideas and statistical results in an accessible manner. Tables and figures are effectively used to illustrate key findings. The structure of the thesis follows a logical flow, guiding the reader through the research process from introduction to conclusion.

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Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

This thesis represents an excellent piece of undergraduate research. It tackles a complex and policy-relevant topic with sophistication, employing advanced econometric techniques to analyze a rich dataset. The findings make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of the relationship between government funding and educational outcomes.
For the defense, I suggest the following questions:

1. How might your findings on the diminishing returns of government funding inform education policy in countries with different levels of current investment in education?

2. Your analysis reveals significant effects of socioeconomic status (ESCS) on student performance. How might policymakers address these disparities alongside considerations of school funding?

According to the new Faculty of Social Sciences rules, I state that:
In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A (95 points).
The results of the Turnitin 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)*	29
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	28
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	19
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	19
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**95**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Matěj Opatrný

DATE OF EVALUATION: 29.8.2024

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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