

# Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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| <b>Student:</b>             | <b>Marek Daňa</b>                          |
| <b>Advisor:</b>             | <b>Doc. PhDr. Zuzana Havránková, Ph.D.</b> |
| <b>Title of the thesis:</b> | <b>Teachers Matter: A Meta-Analysis</b>    |

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

## Short summary

The thesis presents a meta-analysis of the effect of teacher experience on test scores. The mean reported effect is positive, indicating that one additional year of teacher experience increases test scores by 2% of the standard deviation of test scores. But the effect disappears when the literature is corrected for publication bias and more weight given to studies that can isolate arguably exogenous variation in teacher experience and thus are more likely to yield causal estimates. All my main points have already been incorporated in the thesis.

## Contribution

Two prominent studies, Krueger 1999 and Chetty et al., 2011, use data from the STAR experiment in Tennessee (1980s) to argue that more experienced teachers give substantial benefits to students, even later in life. Dozens of other empirical studies on the topic exist, and these studies use different identification approaches. The STAR experiment is well known, but it is unclear whether randomization was properly executed there. So it is worthwhile to consider quasi-experimental evidence as well. The author of this thesis shows that doing so results in virtually zero effects of teacher experience. The finding is important for practical purposes, and the thesis is carefully executed. A paper based on the thesis could be published in a solid journal.

## Methods

The thesis uses up-to-date meta-analysis methods. I appreciate the use of robust Bayesian meta-analysis and the care with which the author applies different statistical approaches (for example, using wild bootstrap when evaluating results from different studies: estimates published by individual studies are unlikely to be independent, and the number of studies is not large enough to ensure that standard clustering approaches give us reasonable results). All these methods go well beyond what is taught at the BA level at Charles University (or elsewhere), a fact I underscore. I also appreciate the new dataset created by the author.

## Literature

The relevant literature is covered well.

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## Manuscript form

The paper is typeset nicely in LaTeX and written in competent English. One thing should have been corrected ex post, and as a supervisor, I take full responsibility for the omission: the title of the thesis should have read 'Do Teachers Matter? A Meta-Analysis.'

## Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

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. Because the author delivers much more than can be expected of a BA student, I believe the thesis should be awarded. The results of the plagiarism software analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

Question for defense: Please discuss in more detail the reasons for the apparent heterogeneity at the top of the funnel plot.

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

| CATEGORY                              | POINTS    |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Contribution (max. 30 points)         | 28        |
| Methods (max. 30 points)              | 30        |
| Literature (max. 20 points)           | 20        |
| Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)      | 19        |
| <b>TOTAL POINTS</b> (max. 100 points) | <b>97</b> |
| <b>GRADE</b> (A – B – C – D – E – F)  | <b>A*</b> |

**NAME OF THE REFEREE:** doc. PhDr. Zuzana Havránková, Ph.D.

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** 9.8.2024

Digitally signed, Zuzana Havrankova

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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     |