

Report on Master Thesis

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

Student:	Daniela Javůrková
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	Language Skills and Employability: The Case of Ukrainian Refugees in the Czech Republic

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

Please provide a short summary of the thesis, your assessment of each of the four key categories, and an overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion. The minimum length of the report is 300 words.

Short summary

In her bachelor thesis, Daniela Javůrková investigates whether host country language proficiency improves the employability of refugees. To tackle this research question, Daniela designed and executed a correspondence experiment. She identified nearly 500 job offers on Czech on-line job portals (www.jobs.cz and www.prace.cz) and sent nearly 1000 experimental CVs in response, two per job offer. Three types of CVs were used: a native Czech woman, a Ukrainian refugee with only a basic command of Czech, and a Ukrainian refugee with a very good command of Czech. Analysis of callback rates (here: invitations for a job interview) of these three groups reveals that Ukrainian women have a significantly lower chance of being invited to an interview. On the other hand, only a tiny and often not statistically significant difference was observed between the two types of Ukrainian refugees. If anything, Daniela observes a higher callback rate among refugees with only a basic knowledge of the Czech language. The author runs several robustness checks and suggests explanations for this slightly confusing result. Given that controlling for job offer fixed effect always leads to insignificant differences between the two types of Ukrainian job candidates, the most appealing interpretation is that employers do not pay attention to, do not believe in, or simply ignore signals about language proficiency and treat all Ukrainian candidates the same.

Contribution

The presented bachelor thesis greatly contributes to our understanding of the situation of Ukrainian refugees (and refugees in general) in the Czech labor market. It also adds an important voice to the growing international literature about refugees' and immigrants' language skills. I think that this thesis can be quite well published as a research paper.

Methods

Daniela uses a controlled experiment to answer the research question. She was very careful with designing the experiment and paid detailed attention to designing the CVs of fictitious job candidates and randomizing the process of responding to job offers. The experiment was run long enough so that a sufficient number of observations was collected. The resulting dataset was then thoroughly examined using both statistical and econometric analysis. I have to stress that Daniela was not satisfied with the first result she obtained and insisted on trying several estimation methods and several specifications to ensure robustness. Thus, the main analysis consists of five linear probability model specifications (two with job offer fixed effects) and four logit/probit specifications (two with job offer fixed effects). This is complemented with several sensitivity checks on different subsamples (e.g. only Prague, only specific types of job offers, only job offers where two Ukrainian CVs were sent, etc.). Daniela very carefully compares the results of all these specifications and formulates her final conclusions based on the combined results inspired by earlier literature. All this makes the presented analysis very mature.

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Literature

The literature review presented in the thesis is comprehensive and informative and proves that Daniela really dived into the topic. Moreover, she actively works with the literature throughout the thesis, compares her results with those of earlier studies, and uses the literature to back up the interpretation of her results.

Manuscript form

The whole thesis is very well organized and written in very good English. Sometimes, the thesis may be written in a bit too poetic language, but this does not interrupt comprehension.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

This is an excellent bachelor thesis. From the beginning, Daniela decided not to take any shortcuts and carefully worked towards answering the research question that interested her. She was well-organized when running the experiment, and actively but critically followed my data analysis suggestions. The resulting work highly outperforms the standards for a bachelor thesis at IES. I am convinced that after slight formatting it can be published in an impacted journal.

The thesis by Daniela Javůrková fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. Actually, it also fulfills the requirements for a master's thesis. I recommend the thesis for the defense and suggest a grade A. Additionally, I suggest that the thesis be considered for an outstanding thesis award.

The results of the Turnitin analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

Suggested question:

If you were to design the experiment again, how (and why) would you proceed?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	29
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	30
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	20
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	19
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	98
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A*

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Barbara Pertold-Gebicka*

DATE OF EVALUATION: **28.8.2024**

Digitálně podepsáno 28.8.2024)

Barbara Pertold-Gebicka

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