

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Šimon Appelt
Advisor:	Doc. PhDr. Julie Chytilová Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	Website Development as a Credence Good: A Field Experiment

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

Contribution

The author contributes to the credence good literature by examining a new area - the website development market. It is evident that the author took a lot of time to prepare the field experiment carefully and did his best to answer the two research questions. The topic is new, and as a bachelor thesis, it is an excellent and above-average piece of work!

But I am suspicious about the contribution of this thesis because of the experimental design. The requirement to develop a new E-shop website is not enough concrete in the e-mails. It led to an expectable high spread of the offer prices because each web developer offered different product (E-shop based on open source tools such as WordPress is much less time demanding than programming an utterly new E-shop).

Moreover, the difference between non-technical and technical e-mails are enormous. In the technical version, there is additional information about previous experience with website management and bought domain and web hosting that might signal several things besides the understanding of the technical language (e.g., wealthiness of the customer, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the easy solutions from templates.) Therefore, I am not sure whether the author can draw any conclusions about the discrimination of the more technically skilled customers.

Methods

The author uses adequate methods and shows a full understanding of its limitations. In my opinion, there is, however, a considerable difference between the products that web developers offered. It might be much more informative to analyze the subgroups of these products separately. Because now there is an average price for three different products as the dependent variable. This problem could also be avoided by using the per hour price instead of the average price (at least as a robustness check on the subsample of firms that provided this information).

Nevertheless, running an own field experiment for a bachelor thesis is far above expectations at this stage of studies, which should be highly appreciated.

Literature

The author provides a brief summary of the recent literature examining the credence goods in field experiments. The author demonstrates a full understanding of the main issues connected to this topic. The author properly quotes relevant literature.

Manuscript form

The thesis is very well written, explains everything clearly, and demands only minor English proofreading. Tables and Figures are well described, and the text refers to them.

I have just one suggestion to divide the section Regression Analysis into Methodology, Results, and Discussion for better orientation in the thesis.

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Summary and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

This is a high-quality bachelor thesis, and I recommend the author to work on it further and try to publish the results. I would suggest stressing more the motivation of the research. Below are several questions for the discussion.

- 1) As I see your results, there is a price difference between the website types (Custom, Open-source, Box/template), and larger firms offer higher prices. What is the share of the Custom solutions offered by small (in terms of employees) companies? How might this affect your results?
- 2) Did you try to measure possible quality of the outcome indirectly? Does there exist some rating of the IT companies/web developers?
- 3) What is the main message of your bachelor thesis?
- 4) What result is the most interesting, according to you?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
Contribution (max. 30 points)	25
Methods (max. 30 points)	29
Literature (max. 20 points)	20
Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)	19
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	93
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Dominika Špolcová

DATE OF EVALUATION: May 30, 2020



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