

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Klára Kantová
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	How Parental Involvement Affects Education Outcomes of their Children

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

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the effects of parental involvement with their children on their education outcomes. To do so, the author uses data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth from 1997. It focuses on respondents born in 1983 and 1984 because during the corresponding wave of data collection included questions parental involvement that were asked to children and parents. The sample is further restricted to children who live with both of their parents, since the author wants to compare differences in paternal and maternal influence.

As a dependent variable, the author uses whether a child completed a high school. Explanatory variables are questions focusing on (i) parental monitoring (e.g., knowledge of peers), (ii) limit setting (e.g., who decides on what to watch on TV) and (iii) limit breaking (e.g., whether a child broke what she agreed to watch on TV). The analysis is based on (i) a standard regression analysis, in which the author controls for several variables that could cause a spurious correlation between the variables of interest (e.g., parental education) and (ii) a matching technique.

The author finds that parental monitoring increases the likelihood graduating. At the same, time limit setting and limit breaking is negatively related. There are no substantial differences between paternal and maternal influence, if anything, mothers seem to be more influential. The estimated effects are robust to using a regression and matching. The author concludes that parental involvement is important, but considers the the result on limit breaking surprising.

Contribution

The topic of the thesis is interesting and subject to active research. There is still relatively little known about which specific aspects of parenting style and parental involvement make children more succesful in school and this thesis makes a useful contribution to this debate. I see it as a solid empirical thesis on an important topic.

Methods

The author uses appropriate methods, given the data at hand. The sample selection, the main variables and their construction are clearly described, as well as the estimation method. It is nice to see how much the author learned how to analyze micro-level data in R. Overall, I found the analysis competently and comperhensively done.

The author is aware of the identification issues, explicitly discusses potential sources of endogeneity and does several meaningful steps, including matching to (at least partially) address it and undertands what these methods can and cannot buy.

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Klára Kantová
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	How Parental Involvement Affects Education Outcomes of their Children

One comment that I have is about construction of the dependent and explanatory variable, which might be seen as arbitrary and make one wonder about robustness. Also, I wonder why the author does not control for location fixed effects. Please see my comment/question for the defence.

Literature

In general, the literature review is very good and comprehensive. It shows appropriate knowledge of the related studies and describes well how previous findings motivate this thesis.

A small quibble ... in some parts of the text (e.g., introduction), it is somewhat hard to separate what are documented facts in the literature and what are authors „wishes“.

Manuscript form

The thesis has a logical structure and is easy to follow. It would benefit from a bit more care given to getting rid of typos.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

I have a few questions/comments that might be worth discussing during the defence:

1. I found the choice and construction of dependent and explanatory variables somewhat arbitrary. In particular, the dependent variable is a dummy variable indicating whether a child completed high school. Nevertheless, the data set contains information about highest completed education level. It would be natural to test whether similar patterns would be found if the outcome variable were completion of tertiary education.

Also, the data set contains information about GPA but this measure is not used as an outcome (ft. 1). Why? The fact that GPA systematically differs across states is not convincing, since also high school graduation rates also varies a lot across individual schools. I do not see a difference.

2. Similarly, why are all explanatory recoded from indeces to be dummy variables? This coding decision causes a loss of information. Are there conceptual reasons to do so that I do not see? Are the main patterns robust to using a more continuous proxies of explanatory variables?

3. In terms of the analysis, although the author controls for several variables that could be a source of spurious correlation (e.g., household size, parental education), another plausible source of spurious correlation could be various factors associated with location, given that the respondents come from various localities across US. For example, in rural areas parents may employ different parenting styles and there may be lower access to schools or worse schools. This is not considered and I wonder whether the results are robust to controlling for location fixed effects (or using information on location when doing the matching).

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Klára Kantová
Advisor:	Barbara Pertold-Gebicka
Title of the thesis:	How Parental Involvement Affects Education Outcomes of their Children

4. I found measures of parental limit setting and child limit breaking somewhat hard to interpret. One could argue that the most „progressive“ parenting style is to try to find agreement with children on what they can and cannot do, while if this is decided solely by a parent, it may indicate an authoritarian parenting style, rather than a greater parental involvement. Similarly, limit breaking could be a proxy for authoritarian parenting style, a child having behavioral problems or a greater parental involvement. Does the data set contains direct questions on parenting style or child behavioral problems in school? If yes, how do they correlate with these measures? This alternative interpretation of the explanatory variables could help to explain the (surprising) negative estimated effect of this variable on high school graduation, since, for example, authoritarian parenting style could reduce intrinsic motivations to learn.

To sum up, in my view, the thesis certainly fulfills the requirements for a master thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade B. The results of the Urkund analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution (max. 30 points)</i>	25
<i>Methods (max. 30 points)</i>	25
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)</i>	18
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	88
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	B

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Michal Bauer*

DATE OF EVALUATION: 18.5.2021

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