

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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| Student: | Le Duc Anh |
| Advisor: | doc. PhDr. Julie Chytilová Ph.D. |
| Title of the thesis: | The relationship between education and labour force structure in African countries: gender comparison |

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 his thesis Duc Anh Le studies the relationship between education and person's labour market status. The author focuses on whether the effects of education on labour market status differ between males and females. The analysis is based on recent cross-sectional surveys in three African countries, i.e., Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. The author deploys a set of logit, linear probability, and multinomial logit models and finds that higher education increases the probability of formal employment and decreases the probability of engaging in subsistence farming. Furthermore, the author finds that the returns to education in terms of formal employment incidence are higher for males.

Contribution

The main contribution of the thesis lies in the novelty of used data and in the scope of the empirical analysis which covers three countries. The fact that the analysis is based on three micro-level data sets constitutes an interesting feature of the thesis as it enables the author to discuss differences countries. Unfortunately, this dimension of the findings received relatively little attention.

Methods

The author relies on a set of logit models which he estimates separately for males and females. He also provides a set of alternative results based on linear probability and multinomial logistic models as a robustness check. Recent waves of the Living Standards Measurement Study are used for all three countries.

The fact that the thesis includes results for three countries based on micro-level data is commendable. Nevertheless, the comparability of the data is not sufficiently discussed. The author notes that *„due to the differences in survey design, the specification of some variables may slightly differ, therefore caution needs to be taken when making cross-country comparisons.“* (pg. 20, l. 8). However, this aspect is not further addressed during the interpretation of the results. Also, little information is provided on the way the data were processed by the author, e.g. treatment of non-response.

Alongside education, the author controls for a set of variables including age, religion, and household size. As employment is affected by a host of other variables which are not controlled for, the author states that the results should not have a causal interpretation but should be taken *„rather as a degree of association between explanatory variables and a person's labour market status incidence“* (pg. 31, l. 10). I believe that the author is correct to state this limitation of the results. However, the potential limitations are not further discussed during the interpretation of the results.

Literature

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The author reviews both macro and micro evidence on the returns to education. Overall, the author seems to have a strong grasp of the literature and does a good job at comparing his findings to the previous literature in the field. Sources are correctly referenced.

Manuscript form

The thesis is nicely formatted and easy to read with only a limited amount of typos. I further appreciate that in addition to the standard manuscript the author provided an online appendix containing additional relevant files. These include the code used for estimation of models and descriptive statistics as well as original survey questionnaires. I believe these form a valuable resource.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

In my view the thesis fulfils the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a **grade B**.

Below I provide some questions that can be asked during the defense:

- Could you discuss in more detail the comparability of the data sets? Have you identified any differences in the specification of included variables that are likely to influence your results? If so, how?
- In your thesis, you acknowledge that you are unable to fully control for other factors affecting employment status. Could you provide a discussion of how these might affect your results, and what might be the direction and magnitude of the possible bias?
- Can you discuss the differences in the results between countries? How do you explain these differences?
- According to the tables in Appendix B, for Ethiopia and Nigeria you include the variable „other religion“ but this is not the case for Sierra Leone. Why?

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</i> (max. 30 points) | 24 |
| <i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points) | 24 |
| <i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points) | 18 |
| <i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points) | 18 |
| TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points) | 84 |
| GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F) | B |

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Marek Šedivý

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DATE OF EVALUATION: 28.8.2021

*Digitálně podepsáno (28. 8. 2021)
Marek Šedivý*

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 |