

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Eva Skácelíková
Advisor:	Doc. Julie Chytilová, Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	Testing the Use of Choice Defaults to Stimulate Behavior of Dancers

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

Short summary

The bachelor thesis of Eva Skácelíková focuses on the topic of health preventive behavior among sportsmen, which, in general, has important implications for private and public health expenditures. Specifically, the main research question is whether it is possible to motivate children/adolescents attending dance classes to stretch after a lesson, using choice defaults – a tool which has been shown to have effects on other types of behavior, including health prevention. This is an interesting and important topic. In order to answer this question, Eva Skácelíková designed and implemented an experiment among a sample of approximately 200 participants of dance classes. The treatment was whether a stretching club was a default option from which participants could decide to opt-out, or whether the default was not being registered in the club and they needed to opt-in.

Contribution

The main contribution of the author to the existing literature is twofold, besides focusing on a specific type of sports activity. First, she studies not only the immediate effect of the treatment but she collected data repeatedly over a longer period of time which allowed her to study longer-term effects, an usual feature for this type of studies. Second, she focuses on the sample of young population and the existing literature is largely mute on the effects of choice defaults on health behavior among this group. This is a very nice contribution for a bachelor thesis. Finally, she managed to implement the experiment and collect a new dataset on her own, which is a challenging task, especially when it involves cooperation with a third party, in this case a dance school. I also want to appreciate the enthusiasm and effort to collect the data, even during the difficult times of Covid-19 pandemics, when this project was relatively risky since it was not clear whether sports clubs would be active during fall 2021 when the data was to be collected.

Methods

The author carefully designed the experiment such that the data allows her to test a set of clearly specified hypotheses. Further, the author uses appropriate methods to analyze the data. The data and analysis are clearly described and carefully executed. Another positive aspect is that the author included a section in which she acknowledges and provides a discussion of limitations of the analysis (although, in my view, a number of them are less of an issue than it seems from the text, since the participants were randomly allocated to the treatment/control group and thus these potential confounds, which are likely to play a similar role in the treatment and control groups, should not explain the observed treatment effect). A minor limitation is the fact that age was measured only as a dummy variable (older vs. younger) and not more precisely.

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Literature

It is obvious that the author has a sound knowledge of the relevant literature, in the fields of behavioral economics in general, and more specifically related to the domain of health preventive behavior. The thesis provides a nice and useful overview of the literature which is clearly structured and includes both the classic as well as recent contributions to the relevant literature.

Manuscript form

The thesis reads well and is written in good English. The text is well-structured and the tables clearly organized. The language and the whole text is not lengthy or wordy, but rather condensed. Although it is relatively short, it includes all the relevant information.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

To sum up, I believe the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. I recommend the thesis for the defense and suggest grade A.

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

Suggested questions for the discussion during the defense:

- You mention different personalities and approaches to teaching among different teachers as a limitation of the study. To what extent can this factor affect the estimate of the treatment effect?
- If you were to organize another experiment on this topic, which new questions would you like to study? What would you do differently in order to improve the design of the study?

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Contribution (max. 30 points)</i>	30
<i>Methods (max. 30 points)</i>	28
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	18
<i>Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)</i>	19
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	95
GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F)	A

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NAME OF THE REFEREE: Julie Chytilová

DATE OF EVALUATION: May 12, 2022

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