Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

Short summary

The theis examines the impact of choice defaults on behavior of dancers, specifically their stretching, using an experiment. The data were collected in a dance studio and contain information about 202 dancers aged 9-17, mainly girls, who attended one of the twelve dancing groups held twice a week. The observation period was one month (having eight observations for each dancing group). The participants of the experiment were divided into treatment and control group. The dancers in treatment group were by default enrolled into a voluntary stretching club (a 5-minute long stretching session after the dancing lesson), while the dancers in the control group could enrol on their own. Therefore, the treatment group was exposed to opt-out option, while the control group was exposed to the opt-in option. The main outcome is whether the dancers were enrolled in the stretching club, thus examining the effect of the choice-default, and whether the dancers stretched or not. Further, the effect of age on the probability of stretching is examined and the persistence of the stretching routine in time is analysed. The author finds that the choice default significantly affects the enrollment into the stretching club – the enrollment rate is by 17.8 pp higher in the treatment group. The stretching rate is also higher in the treatment group, but this result is not statistically significant. The older dancers are more likely to stretch and the probability to stretch decreases over time. The results demonstrate that including the stretching routine after every dancing class for all the participants could increase the stretching rate and therefore lead to injury prevention and thus save healthcare costs.

Contribution

The contribution of the thesis lies mainly in examining the effect of choice defaults in sports (dancing) on stretching, and focusing on children rather than adults. It also analyses the persistence of the effect in time and the effect of age on stretching.

As regular stretching is associated with injury prevention, having a stretching session after performing sports could significantly decrease sports injuries which are associated with substantial costs – the costs of healthcare, but also the costs of lost productivity and intangible costs (i.e. lower quality of life), which are quite challenging to measure, but are equally important.

The results are not generalizable for all sports and mainly apply to dancers who are predominantly girls. It would be very interesting to perform a similar experiment among other sportsmen, e.g. runners or cyclists, and to observe long-term effects on their health.

Methods

The design of the experiment and the hypotheses are clearly stated and explained. The data collected during the experiment are well presented and shown in tables. The tools used in the analysis are relevant to the research questions being investigated, and adequate to the author's level of studies. The variables chosen for the analysis and also the assumptions for performing the analysis are nicely described. The methods are carefully introduced and results are well presented and interpreted. The author is aware of several limitations associated with this kind of experiment and these are very well summarised in the discussion. I would only appreciate a more thorough robustness check, but maybe it was not possible.

Literature

The literature review is very well structured and the author does a good job summarizing available studies on the topic of choice defaults and the nudge theory, with the focus on healthcare. The relevant studies are very well presented in the thesis and demonstrate the author's knowledge of related literature, with clear referencing.

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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

I would appreciate if the citations in the text were linked with the list of references at the end of the thesis. Moreover, more information about the effect of stretching on reducing healthcare costs could be provided (e.g. the extent to which it could possibly affect the costs), as well as better explanation of the effect of stretching on the injury prevention, as some reviews have shown that stretching itself does not lead to injury prevention (e.g. *To stretch or not to stretch: the role of stretching in injury prevention and performance* by M. P. McHugh and C. H. Cosgrave or *The Impact of Stretching on Sports Injury Risk: A Systematic Review of the Literature* by Stephen B. Thacker et al.).

Manuscript form

The thesis is structured well, with clear referencing to tables, results and bibliography. Some very long tables could be moved into the Appendix (e.g. Table 12), some figures (e.g. Figure 1) could use different colors of labels and all figures would look better with larger fonts so that the labels are easier readable, but this is very subjective. The thesis could also contain a list of tables and figures at the beginning.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

The thesis analyses the effect of choice defaults on the behavior of dancers by conducting an experiment. The hypotheses are tested using appropriate methods and results are carefully presented, interpreted and summarised. The experiment has several limitations which are summarised in the discussion. Overall, the thesis is well structured and written in almost perfect English. In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade A. The results of the Urkund analysis do not indicate significant text similarity with other available sources.

For the defense, the author could discuss:

1. The choice of dancers for this type of experiment was at first a little surprising for me as one would assume that dancers usually stretch regularly as warm-up and cool-down during the lesson. Maybe it depends on the type of dancing though. Wouldn't this affect the results?

2. Looking at the results of the persistence of stretching rate in time, it is visible that the stretching rate in the treatment group decreases for all periods except for the last one where it slightly increases. My question is whether before the experiment, were the participants aware of the length of the experiment (i.e. did they know how long would the stretching sessions last?), as this could influence the results?

3. Regarding the design of the experiment, are there any studies that show the relationship between the length of stretching routine and the probability of getting injured? I personally think that 5-minute long stretching session is too short to have an effect on injury prevention. However, I understand that it probably was not possible due to several constraints (e.g. time, staff, place) to have the stretching session longer. Additionally, warm-up stretching is equally important and should also be incorporated in order to lower the probability of getting injured.

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	27
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	29
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	18
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	18
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**92**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**A**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Mgr. Petra Landovská

DATE OF EVALUATION: May 16, 2022

Digitally signed (May 16, 2022):
Petra Landovská

_____

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