

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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| Student: | Alexander Kling |
| Advisor: | PhDr. Lenka Šťastná Ph.D. |
| Title of the thesis: | The effect of Cultural and Natural Heritage on Tourism Attractiveness in Slovakia |

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 thesis aims to analyze the effects of cultural and natural heritage sites on the tourism attractiveness of 71 Slovakian districts (excluding five districts of Bratislava and merging four districts of Košice). The author uses cross-sectional annual data for the year 2018. The year 2018 was chosen as it is not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a dependent variable, the author uses the number of visitors in accommodation establishments per district (as well as the number of visitors in accommodation establishments per district per capita and its logarithmic transformation). The main independent variables are the number of national cultural monuments and the number of national nature reserves and national natural monuments. In addition, the author uses variables for the attractiveness of ski resorts, sales of medical spas, population, and unemployment rate. He also included the variable of distance from the capital (Bratislava).

The results show that tourism attractiveness is oriented toward the Tatra region. Speaking of natural and cultural heritage, the results of extended OLS regression show that cultural heritage has a positive effect on the dependent variable. On the other hand, the estimate of natural heritage shows no significant effect.

Contribution

The topic of the thesis is interesting and relevant. There is no recent study dealing with this topic. This thesis broadens the limited literature. The author draws a clear conclusion from the results. Moreover, he states potential implications which may be used by employees in the tourism industry.

However, I would strongly recommend stressing the contribution in the abstract and introduction. The contribution should be clear to the reader from the beginning.

Methods

The author uses appropriate methods. The methodology is more than sufficient for the bachelor thesis. The selection of the variables is clearly described and supported by the literature. To control the economic situation, the author uses the unemployment rate for each district. I would recommend including (or at least trying to include) other variables to control the economic situation (i.e. GDP per capita). Please see the comment section below.

He clearly describes the pros and cons of model choices. Moreover, he discusses the possible occurrence of endogeneity as well as overfitting. As a robustness check, he compares his results with the year 2019 (also not affected by pandemics), which I found appropriately chosen.

The author dealt with data unavailability. He solved this problem with help of other years which were not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerning the other variables, I am not convinced that the population of the district determines the size of the district (please see comment section).

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Literature

The author proved distinct knowledge of such a topic. The author presents a very helpful literature review for the reader.

Mentioning the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of the thesis gave me the impression that the author will somehow deal with it. He mentions the pandemics at the very beginning as an important part of travel tourism, which is undoubtedly true. However, the year of his interest is the year 2018, i.e. pre-pandemic year. Thus, I think it should not be mentioned as the most important part at the beginning of the thesis.

Manuscript form

The thesis is easy to follow. However, sometimes it contains long sentences and the meaning of them is getting lost. Moreover, the methodological part is very detailed, this is a thesis, not a textbook.

I would suggest including notes under the tables with explanations of the abbreviations. Also, there is an error in the table numbering. For example, on p. 59, the author refers to Table 3 instead of Table 5 (also on p. 61, the author refers to Table 4 instead of Table 6, on p. 67, on p. 69, on p. 70), I would recommend using the ref function in Latex to mention tables.

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

The author demonstrates a full understanding of the topic. In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor's thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. I recommend it for the defense and suggest a grade B.

Suggestions for the discussion during the defense:

1. In the Introduction, you mention pandemics a lot. However, in the analysis, there is no pandemic included. I think it would be interesting to compare pre-pandemic year with pandemic year. Have you thought about it?
2. Why did you use the unemployment rate as a control for the economic situation? (btw. when speaking of the unemployment rate, do not state only „unemployment“ but always state unemployment rate). What about other variables to control the economic situation? Have you thought about them? For example GDP (per capita)?
3. Why did you not use a variable for the size of the district? There is a big difference in population in the „city district“ vs. the „mountain district“.
4. What about panel data? If there are data for more years, why did you not use the panel dataset for your analysis?
5. What about some camping sites? Slovakia has a lot of opportunities to sleep outside. I understand that it is impossible to measure sleepovers in tents, but some camps can be included. I am not sure, what is included in „accommodation establishments“ (only hotels and apartments?).

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

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

| CATEGORY | POINTS |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points) | 26 |
| <i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points) | 26 |
| <i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points) | 20 |
| <i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points) | 17 |
| TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points) | 89 |
| GRADE (A – B – C – D – E – F) | B |

NAME OF THE REFEREE: Klára Kantová

DATE OF EVALUATION: 27. 8. 2022

Digitálně podepsáno (27.8.2022):
Klára Kantová

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 |