Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

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):*

Short summary
The thesis aims to find determinants of tourism attractiveness (measured by the number of visitors) of Slovakian regions using data from 2018. Besides variables describing regions' natural and cultural heritage that are essential, the author includes other variables representing tourist attractions (ski resorts, spas), regional economic performance, and distance from Bratislava. The author also considers potential spatial effects and estimates a model including tourist attractions from neighboring regions. Surprisingly, natural heritage seems not attractive unless there is a ski resort.

Contribution
The analysis provides an interesting insight into tourism demand in Slovakia. While tourism demand and supply are thoroughly studied in the literature, to my knowledge, nobody has ever focused on Slovakian regions.
Findings enable the author to provide some recommendations for the tourism industry that relate to promoting other areas rich in natural heritage (besides the Tatras region, which is a significant outlier).

Alexander is aware of the limitations of the thesis, such as a lower number of observations, data availability, and not considering attractions and tourists of regions beyond the Slovakian border.

Methods
The author works with cross-sectional data (71 regions in 2018) and estimates the model using the OLS approach. He carefully examines all the steps taken throughout the analysis and tests OLS assumptions for the final preferred model. In the second step, he tests for spatial dependence and estimates the SLX model (OLS model including covariates representing neighborhood).

Finally, the author carries out a robustness check using data from 2019 and 2017.

My major comment regarding the methodology follows from the results of spatial dependence tests that indicate possible spatial lag dependence. It means that the number of tourists in a neighboring region might affect the number of tourists in a domestic region. That is likely to be true. This finding should be logically followed by an estimation of the spatial model, including this effect.

Literature
The thesis demonstrates the author's good understanding of theoretical and empirical literature on tourism demand and supply and tourism attractiveness. The author cites all the sources properly. I only found one recent study that could have been included (Dogru et al. 2021).

Report on **Bachelor / Master Thesis**

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

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**

Manuscript form

The thesis is well-structured, but some parts are too lengthy, include unnecessary details, and are hard to follow. The abstract is too long and contains redundant information. Language is appropriate, but Tables 5-9 are wrongly referred to in the text (because of a change in the numbering).

Overall evaluation and suggested questions for the discussion during the defense

In my view, the thesis fulfills the requirements for a bachelor thesis at IES, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. The author chose an interesting topic and conducted the analysis properly (given some shortcomings mentioned above). 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.

The following questions might be raised during the defense:

1. What is the most important finding of your thesis?
2. What do you think is the greatest weakness of the thesis?
3. Tourism demand responds to the supply of services – mainly accommodation facilities. How does empirical literature solve this endogeneity? Are there any data on tourist accommodation that could be used in a similar analysis?

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	25
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	27
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	19
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	15
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**86**
GRADE	**(A – B – C – D – E – F)**	**B**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Lenka Šťastná, Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 28.8.2022

Digitally signed (28.8.2022)
Lenka Šťastná

_____

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