

Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	Samuel Škoda
Advisor:	Michal Bauer
Title of the thesis:	Effort and cheating behavior: An experiment

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

The thesis links two interesting topics from behavioral economics: (1) the effect of effort and associated entitlement on choices that involve moral dilemmas and (2) the prevalence of cheating. The thesis provides the first test of whether effort increases cheating. The topic is relevant for understanding the conditions when cheating is more likely to occur.

The paper is written in very good English, the author uses efficient writing style, similar to standard research papers. This is a laudable outcome on its own for a BA student.

The thesis summarizes well the literature on both cheating and entitlements, although somewhat more detail on the latter would be perhaps useful. The literature review leads to clearly stated hypotheses which are then tested in a laboratory experiment performed among 90 students at LEE at VŠE. Although the sample is small, conducting own experiment with real incentives is beyond norm for BA thesis.

The main finding is that experimentally induced higher effort does not increase cheating on average. There seem to be some effects on distribution of cheating, which are not very statistically significant though, and may perhaps motivate further work. Other findings include interesting correlations, namely that economics students cheat more compared to non-econ students. The author also provides a relatively balanced discussion about the limitations of the study and alternative explanations, which is also a noteworthy feature for a bachelor thesis.

When starting the work on this thesis Samuel (and also I) had somewhat higher expectations from this project, in particular in terms of sample size. This would allow testing additional questions as well as having more precise estimates about the effects of effort on cheating. Securing funding turned out to be difficult, given the time constraints. Nevertheless, all in all Samuel has invested a lot of effort into the thesis, especially in analyzing the results, linking it to current literature and ultimately writing a nice thesis.

For defense, I recommend discussion about implications of this project for future research.

Overall, I hesitate between grade A or B.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	20
<i>Methods (max. 30 points)</i>	20
<i>Contribution (max. 30 points)</i>	20
<i>Manuscript Form (max. 20 points)</i>	20

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TOTAL POINTS	(max. 100 points)	80
GRADE	(1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	1-2

NAME OF THE REFEREE: *Michal Bauer*

DATE OF EVALUATION: **31.5.2013**

Referee Signature

EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES AND SCALE:

LITERATURE REVIEW: *The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and command of recent literature. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way.*

Strong	Average	Weak
20	10	0

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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
30	15	0

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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
30	15	0

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.*

Strong	Average	Weak
20	10	0

Overall grading:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE		
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= výborně
61 – 80	2	= good	= velmi dobře
41 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= dobře
0 – 40	4	= fail	= nedoporučuji k obhajobě