

Report on Master Thesis

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

Student:	Bc. Tomáš Vlach
Advisor:	doc. PhDr. Tomáš Havránek, Ph.D.
Title of the thesis:	Income Elasticity of Water Demand: A Meta-Analysis

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

The thesis presents a meta-analytical view on income elasticity of water demand. As usual in all meta-analytical studies, the author does not investigate the primary data to establish an estimate for the variable in question, he rather takes the data set of previously established results of other authors (which differ among each other) to investigate a possible bias in reporting the established estimates available in the quite vast literature on the topic of water demand, in particular its income elasticity.

I should state right away that this review might not be much helpful for the committee as I can only applaud the author for a carefully crafted piece of written work to which it is quite difficult to find any relevant flaw. The English is quite perfect on its own, the structure of the text is logical and the reader is guided through each part of the text in an efficient way, the description of mathematical methods is rigorous, the application very transparent and subsequent comments of the established results are in a short and yet thorough way commented on and confronted with established research hypotheses in the early part of the thesis. Overall, the thesis serves as a deep and complete study of the topic.

In part, the high praise could be addressed to the supervisor himself as he has supervised nearly 40 theses (bachelor and master) on meta analysis of impressive list of commodities and it is thus no longer a surprise that the content of this particular thesis is of such high level as the more or less same analysis for just a different commodity have been previously defended by older colleagues of Tomáš Vlach.

Nevertheless, to mention at least some negatives of this thesis (I shall leave the judgment whether my previous comment is ment in a positive or negative way unanswered as it concerns the supervisor rather than the author of this thesis), I find a bit puzzling that the bachelor thesis „Price Elasticity of Water Demand: A Meta-Analysis“ defended at IES FSV UK in September 2013 by Bc. Richard Thoma (also) under supervision of doc. Havránek is not included in the list of literature nor it is part of the literature review. I understand that it concerns price elasticity instead of income elasticity, but it takes into account the same commodity – water. Perhaps, I might suggest the committee to ask the author of this thesis the following question during the defense: „As these two theses concern price and income elasticities of water demand, how do the results of both theses complement each other towards a better understanding of properties of water demand itself?“

I shall finish with a minor suggestion to replace all figures by their higher-resolution version in any derived text (rigorous thesis or paper in an international journal).

Regardless of how the defence proceeds, I propose grade 1.

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

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	18
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	29
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	29
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	19
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	95
GRADE (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	1

NAME OF THE REFEREE: RNDr. Michal Červinka, Ph.D.

DATE OF EVALUATION: June 14, 2016

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