

# Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Miriama Tóthová</b>
<b>Advisor:</b>	<b>PhDr. Julie Chytilová PhD.</b>
<b>Title of the thesis:</b>	<b>Maternal Education and its Impact on Child Health Outcomes</b>

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

Miriama Tóthová studies in her thesis effects of education of mothers on health outcomes of their children. Research questions are analysed in the context of two developing countries – Kenya and Ethiopia. The author uses large representative datasets which allow her to control for various confounding factors and enables her to draw more general conclusions. The results suggest strong and significant positive effects of maternal education on different child health outcomes. Improvement in immunization, wasting and stunting seems to be channeled via empowerment, access to media and literacy.

The thesis is well structured and written. The author defines theoretical model first from which she derives hypotheses. Literature review however mostly builds on outdated literature. Most of the studies cited date to nineties. It is hard to say if the reason is that the topic is not explored anymore or the author just did not include newer studies. It is quite problematic for the later analysis since older studies could suffer from various econometric problems which were not addressed before, especially how to deal with endogeneity.

The analysis is correctly specified, where Miriama discusses why and how she restricts the sample and try to estimate regressions multiple times in order to control if results are not influenced by the excluded observations. I also appreciate the effort to reduce endogeneity. Clearly, sorting to education is not random and to great extent depends on factors as abilities and other background characteristics. Although the author does the best to control for background characteristics, controlling for abilities is always tricky and I doubt the analysis is able to control for all unobserved effects. Therefore, I would be careful about interpretation of results. Then Miriama tries to disentangle mechanisms behind the variable education which is a very good idea. The problem could be that all variables could be correlated not only with education but also with each other. Then, inclusion of them into the regression would induce multicollinearity and the results would be biased. Therefore, it would be better to check for multicollinearity of those variables.

It is also not clear to me why she studies the effects in two countries. At the beginning it is stated that both countries differ in various outcomes but there is no additional hypothesis why the outcomes should differ in those countries. I would therefore suggest either to add more detailed reasons and hypotheses why the analysis is conducted for both countries or I would restrict it to only one country.

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From practical point of view, as a reader I would appreciate if the author would use cross references and citing system. Especially cross-references to tables would simplify the reader navigation in the text, since the author refers herself to appendix quite often.

To sum it up, the thesis fully satisfies requirements for bachelor thesis at the IES. It is well written, results are interesting and well interpreted. There are some shortcomings in terms of methodology but I understand that they are beyond the scope of bachelor level. I would also appreciate literature review with more recent papers. From all of the abovementioned reasons, I recommend the thesis for the defence and suggest grade A (výborně).

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

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<i>Literature</i> (max. 20 points)	15
<i>Methods</i> (max. 30 points)	22
<i>Contribution</i> (max. 30 points)	30
<i>Manuscript Form</i> (max. 20 points)	20
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b> (max. 100 points)	<b>87</b>
<b>GRADE</b> (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)	<b>1</b>

**NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Václav Korběl**

**DATE OF EVALUATION: 21.4.2016**

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**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	<b>1</b>	= excellent	= výborně
61 – 80	<b>2</b>	= good	= velmi dobře
41 – 60	<b>3</b>	= satisfactory	= dobře
0 – 40	<b>4</b>	= fail	= nedoporučuji k obhajobě