Report on Bachelor / Master Thesis

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

Student:	**Bc. Olesia Kiiashko**
Advisor:	**Doc. Tomáš Havránek Ph.D.**
Title of the thesis:	**The Price Elasticity for Higher Education: A Meta Analysis**

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

Olesia deals with a topic of elasticity for higher education. She specifically studies if changes in tution fees impact enrollment rate. It is a very important question from policy perspective since in many countries tutions have dramatically increased in last decades. To answer the postulated question she employs meta-analytical approach. At the beginning, I was a bit sceptical if this is the most appropriate approach since elasticity may be very heterogenous with both place and time. However, the author convinced me this approach indeed brings new and interesting insights into the topic. Olesia finds that so far mixed evidence is partially caused by publication bias and if authors account for endogeneity in decision for higher education. After adjusting for all the differences, the overall effect is negative. Moreover, getting more negative in recent studies.

The thesis is overall of a high quality. It is methodologically rigorous and complex but on the other hand described very clearly so that non-expert in meta-analyses like me can easily follow. Moreover, the author considers in her analysis many important elements omitted in previous studies, especially I appreciate inclusion of a variable if original study dealt with endogeneity in enrollment decision. Endogeneity in education decision is always an isssue and omission would be problematic. Besides methodology itself, the author clearly describes criteria for selection of studies into her meta-analysis since the selection process could be prone to arbitrary decisions. However, in this case the process is very transparent without any controversial step. Last but not least, the thesis is nicely structured, written with adequate language. There are few typos, scattered in the final part of the thesis, but not in the extent to distract a reader.

I have a few minor comments and questions which were not perfectly answered in the thesis:
1) Policy discussion
   a. There are important differences between short and medium term elasticity (change in demand) and long term elasticity (change in preferences, change in value of higher education). The author finds differences in coefficients with respect to time so it would be nice to link it to recommendations.
   b. It could be expected that elasticity may differ country to country. So it would be nice to look at heterogeneity not only in terms of number of observations or countries but also according to country of origin.
2) Analysis
   a. How does the author deal with different measures of enrollment? The problem with different measures is mentioned in the methodology section but I could not find the solution.

The thesis is of a high quality, therefore **I recommend the thesis for defence and suggest the grade A.**

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

CATEGORY		POINTS
Literature	*(max. 20 points)*	18
Methods	*(max. 30 points)*	28
Contribution	*(max. 30 points)*	28
Manuscript Form	*(max. 20 points)*	18
TOTAL POINTS	*(max. 100 points)*	**92**
GRADE	*(1 – 2 – 3 – 4)*	**1**

NAME OF THE REFEREE: PhDr. Václav Korbel

DATE OF EVALUATION: 23.8.2016

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