REFEREE’S REVIEW

Program: Master in International Business Program
Student: Elena Shreder
Title of thesis: IMPACT OF CRM ADOPTION ON COMPANY’S PERFORMANCE ON THE EXAMPLE OF FINANCIAL SERVICE COMPANIES

Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis. Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis’ topic, aim and objectives. 3

Structure and logic of the text flow. Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis’ structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts. 4

Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives. Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives. 4

Quality of data gathering and description. Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references. 3

Scientific aspect of the thesis. Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives. 4

Practical/applied nature of research. Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results. 3

Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfills the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references. 3

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = poor.

Additional comments:

The paper is written on a quite interesting topic. There is a lot articles and data concerning CRM in all sort of companies. It also seems that author is curious and interested in this topic, she writes text with passion, however, she wasn’t able to justify it and set the aim and goals. For instance, the author argues that CRM might be found in many article and surveys (it’s true), but neither of these surveys study “potential impact which CRM may have on enterprise in general...” (p.10) and it’s not quite true, because nearly every textbook about CRM starts with these questions. Moreover, there are plenty of “industrial reports” that study all sorts of influence on profit or other performance indicators. Second weak point is that author sets the aim of the paper as “to investigate the influence of CRM related factors... on company’s performance”. It is hard to understand what does author means saying “CRM-related factors” and even harder to understand, how it is possible to analyze pure influence of these factors. I suppose, there different types of companies, with different background, on different markets, etc., and all of them will have really different impact of CRM introduction on their performance. Hence, I believe, that the aim is defined weakly.

Structure of the paper is good and meets the requirements for such papers. Logic is coherent and author doesn’t make it complicated. It is quite easy to read the paper and I suppose, it is one of the strong points of the paper. Actually, there are just two main parts: theoretical review and analysis of the results. So far they are well structured.
The task to write a theoretical part on CRM topic is an easy and very hard task at the same. Easy – because there is a lot of materials and well-written articles (the author refer to them in her paper). Hard – because there are so many aspects that you have to remember, that it is quite hard to do outstanding work here. Presented text is not excellent, but good enough. All main issues were mentioned. At the same moment, I believe some “general” and more specific theory is missing, or in a “wrong place of the paper”, or very short. For instance, I believe, background on relationship marketing should be deeper. Also author had to mention more areas of managements that are connected to CRM. In other words, we have short theoretical introduction, but not solid and coherent framework for the survey. Also it was quite hard to find theory concerning the real aim of the paper.

One of the strongest points of the paper is the survey that author did. They are not perfect (from statistical point of view – for example, I believe, that TIME and LATE variables are highly correlated, so we can’t use them in one regression model), however the approach it good. Methodology is described as it should be done, at least formally. I suppose, that limitation part is missing as well as discussion is not very long and deep (the results might be much better). Concerning the survey itself, I suppose it is good if you compare companies of a certain segment or with particular characteristics, but it is hard to put all companies in “one model”.

The reviewer wasn’t able to find any practical recommendations. There is only one “discussion part” that, actually substitutes discussion of the results, practical implications, limitations of the research and conclusions. This is the weakest part of the paper. Moreover, the text contains a lot of mistakes of different kind. Author should be attentive and careful about it.

Master thesis of Elena Shredor meets the requirements of Master in International Business program, and deserves a satisfactory grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date

Referee: Konstantin V. Krotov