

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	MITIM
Student:	Tommi Aleksii Lahtinen
Title of thesis:	Customer loyalty in DIY retailing in Russia: Innovative approaches for improving customer retention through technology

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.

Author pays particular attention to justifying the topic choice from the theoretical perspective, starting introduction with the core concepts in the customer loyalty scheme. Additional justification is demonstrated in relation to the industry/company and the needs of deeper loyalty programs investigation.

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.

The flow of the text is logical; all the parts are properly linked together. The overall structure of the thesis is well balanced.

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.

Thesis is based on an in-depth analysis of existing theory and evolution of research on customer orientation, customer loyalty, customer relationship management, customer value and retention. Theoretical analysis is deep and addresses relevant construct. The model tested in the thesis is based on existing research. Hypotheses are derived from theory throughout theoretical part of the thesis and are rather well justified.

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.

Empirical part is based on quantitative study and web-survey of nearly 100 respondents. Survey is one of potential methods for research on this topic. Author might have discussed alternative methods and justified the selection of a survey as the most appropriate for the thesis aims & objectives, as well as formulated research questions.

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.

Thesis is based on existing theory and quite profound theoretical analysis. The tested model is based on previous research results and is well justified. At the same time thesis would benefit from discussing alternatives – for example, how exactly research approach was selected?

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.

Thesis is aiming at analysis of customer loyalty programs in a particular industry, thus practical implications can be quite substantial. It would be very beneficial for the thesis to add particular practical implications.

Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.

Quality of thesis layout meets standards of MITIM program.

The Master thesis of Tommi Aleksii Lahtinen meets for master thesis of MITIM program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date 24.09.2012



Scientific Advisor: Asc. Professor Maria M. Smirnova