

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business
Student:	Sergey Yakovlev
Title of thesis:	Logistics outsourcing and firm performance in internationalized and non-internationalized companies in Russia.

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.

Master Thesis of Sergei Yakovlev continues the series of studies based upon a sample survey of 780 manufacturers operating in Russia with a minimum of 100 employees conducted for the Deutsche Bahn and Russian Railways Center for International Logistics and Supply Chain Management. The survey deals with various aspects of Contract Logistics and Outsourcing in Russia. The goal of undertaken research is to investigate the relationship between logistics outsourcing and firm-level performance in 2 groups of companies operating in Russia: internationalized and non-internationalized companies. Although the research topic is clear cut, the author does not present it in the text and, respectively, the research objectives are not identifies as well.

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 structure of thesis is clear cut and fully reflects logic of research. It is easy to read and follow the logic of the study. All required basic notions, concept and models are introduced in a consecutive manner with clear explanations and required references.

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.

Despite the absence of formulated research objectives in the text the logic of research covers adequately the research goal of the study, It is clearly presented in the structure and logic of the text flow. Regretfully, the author did not include in the text his estimations of the relationship based on alternative (Cobb-Douglas) model of dependence of firm-level performance.

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.

Data collected is sufficient to solve the research problem of the study. The size of the 2 samples allows for required calculations and further comparisons. The raw data collected is clearly and meaningfully enveloped into performance variable and other variables reflecting relevant features of the companies. Ordinal data is correctly normalized (Min:Max normalization) for further use in regression analysis.

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.

The author demonstrated creative thinking in developing methodology of the aggregating partial measures of firm-level performance as well as enveloping other attributes of the companies into single attributes. His interpretations of results of models' estimations deserve to be mentioned as an achievement.

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.

The author provides a meaningful comparison of outsourcing behaviour of Russian internationalized and non-internationalized companies.

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

Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation. The tables, figures, and references are done according to the standards of the Regulations for master thesis preparation. The shortcoming of text presented the absence of titles for the figures and tables.

The Master thesis of Sergey Yakovlev meets for master thesis of Master in International Business program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date September 24, 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yuri V. Fedotov', written in a cursive style.

Scientific Advisor: Associate Professor Yuri V.Fedotov