

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	MIB
Student:	Tobias Watzinger
Title of thesis:	The management of international strategic alliances in the Russian energy industry

<p>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.</p> <p>The main pre-requisite of the selection of the Master thesis topic, as presented by the author, appears as the fact that strategic alliances are becoming a more and more common method for companies, in particular, those from Russia, to internationalise their activities firms. At the same time, there are a great number of alliances which failed in reaching their targets, partly because of management problems. Thus, the goal of the Master thesis prepared by Tobias Watzinger to understand factors influencing management practices in international strategic alliances between Russian and European corporations in the energy sector is rather relevant.</p> <p>To reach the main aim of the study, several research objectives have been assigned, namely (1) to generalise basic theories and concepts in the field of management in international strategic alliances; (2) to discuss alliance management practices and identify the most influencing factors; (3) to conduct case studies in the Russian energy industry; (4) to sum up influencing factors and develop an integrative model for management systems in alliances and make appropriate managerial implications.</p> <p>The topic of the thesis, its main aim and objectives are aligned properly.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>The formulation of the research main aim and selection of the approach to problem solving looks logical and helps the author form the relevant structure of the thesis which is rather balanced and provides an opportunity to identify what factors influence the management structures and processes in ISAs between Russian and foreign energy companies. The theoretical and practical parts on the thesis are combined effectively to make appropriate conclusions and management implications.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>The theoretical framework proposed by the author looks well argued by the literature overview and opens a room for a case study analysis undertaken in the thesis. Six cases of international strategic alliances have been examined with a help of structured interviews with top-managers in these alliances.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>A primary source of information used in the thesis includes data from six structured interviews of managers in energy technology and energy supply alliances. Based on these interviews, some relevant factors influencing the design of a management system and decision-making procedures were identified. The combined results of 6 cases studies have been presented in the form a analytical tables designed by the author. Six other alliances have been analysed on the basis of data from secondary sources.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>To make appropriate conclusions, the author has elaborated "an integrated model to divide research cases into categories'. This model allows classifying alliances along the two dimensions, balance of alliance power and cost of contract. The four types of alliances have been identified on the basis of proposed classification scheme.</p> <p>The contents of the study and appropriate findings and conclusions are presented in a descriptive form accompanied with a number of tables.</p>

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 research describes directly a management practice of Russian companies establishing strategic alliances with foreign partners. In the cases analysed by the author, factors explaining management practices in international strategic alliances with Russian partners have been identified. The author has identified 3 situations (which are named 'scenarios' in the paper) of management development in strategic alliances which may serve as an orientation for alliance managers.

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

The quality of layout is appropriate with a minor incorrectness.

The quality of data collection and analysis undertaken by Tobias Watzinger shows his appropriate analytical skills and qualification to make interpretations of research findings in the selected area. The Master thesis of Tobias Watzinger meets the requirements for master thesis of MIB Programme, thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

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Scientific Advisor: Professor Andrey Medvedev