

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business
Student:	Evgenia Belova
Title of thesis:	STRATEGIC ROLE OF REVERSE LOGISTICS FOR MANUFACTURING 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.

The concept of Reverse Logistics (RL) is a relatively new field of study that has been approached systematically in the early nineties and became especially popular topic in Logistics and Supply Chain studies in the last 5-7 years. Special attention given to RL is explained not only by high costs related to this activity, but also by the need to build up an environment friendly business worldwide. The goal and objectives of research are not well harmonized (for instance, objectives 3 and 4 can be hardly seen as shedding light on strategic role of RL in manufacturing companies).

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 the text submitted complies with research questions settled for the study. The theoretical part could be expanded with more detailed description and analysis of different types of RL as well as having more deep study of the strategic role of RL in manufacturing companies (as declared in the title of the thesis). There are only 3 pages on strategic role of RL (pp.27-30)! The empirical part would benefit from including into the study more relevant data to provide a sound background for revealing the relationships specified in research objectives 3-4. Needless to say, that results received from data contained in a survey of Contract Logistics and Outsourcing in Russia (conducted in 2011 by the Deutsche Bahn and Russian Railways Center for International Logistics and Supply Chain Management) which is weekly related to the scope of research are doubtful and, thus, conclusions and recommendations appear to be unreliable.

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.

Quality of analytical approach is rather poor. The badly structured literature review and 2 Chapters 3 (Chapter 3. Methodology, pp.32-36; Chapter 3. Data Analysis, pp.36-44) which mostly reproduce description of a survey of Contract Logistics and Outsourcing in Russia by Deutsche Bahn and Russian Railways Center for International Logistics and Supply Chain Management are strong arguments to assess negatively this attribute of the study. It is, also, worth mentioning here that there is no reasoning or any explanations of the choice of independent variables for regression model (many of factors/variables seem irrelevant to RL). There are also strong doubts about correctness of using ordinal survey data in a submitted regression model, although the author argues that the data was normalized (however, the type of normalization is not presented in the text).

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.

The data collected for the study is not sufficient for full scale solid analysis on the basis of advanced quantitative models. The author employs the data from a survey of Contract Logistics and Outsourcing in Russia by Deutsche Bahn and Russian Railways Center for International Logistics and Supply Chain Management. As mentioned above, the data selected by the author look irrelevant to the research question of the study. Therefore, the study results are mostly senseless with regard to the research topic. The literature list is relevant, but amazingly it mostly consists of books and articles dated by years of mid zeros (2003-2007), despite rapid growth of interest in RL during the last 3 years.

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.

Regression model is the only scientific aspect in the thesis, although there are doubts about correctness of its use for the data sample employed in the study.

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.

Insignificant for the mentioned above reasons.

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. Unfortunately, there are quite a number of misprints in the text, however, they do not have strong negative effect over the perception of the text.

The Master thesis of Evgenia Belova meets the requirements 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



Scientific Advisor: Associate Professor Yuri V. Fedotov