

REFEREE'S REVIEW

Program:	Master in International Business, with Concentration in International Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Student:	Murasheva Mariia Valerievna
Title of thesis:	Analysis of relationship between operational performance and supply chain sustainability: A case of logistics service providers in Finland and 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.	4			
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.	5			
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 fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	5			

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = the thesis meets all the requirements, 4 = the thesis meets almost all the requirements, 3 = a lot of the requirements are not met in the thesis, 2 = the thesis does not meet the requirements.

Additional comments:

Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.

The research goal is formulated by the author clearly enough with regard to the topic in the title. However, topic in the title of thesis ("Analysis of relationship between operational performance and supply chain sustainability...") is more complicated and broader than the main goal of this paper as formulated by the author ("to explore the relationship between operational performance and supply chain sustainability metrics in case of Finnish and Russian road freight transportation companies"). Similar disparity of relationship between operational performance and supply chain sustainability metrics/ measures of environmental performance and operational and environmental performance is revealed in the research objectives: "(1) to study the impact of operational performance measures on environmental company's performance and vice versa; (2) to explore whether there is significant difference in operational and environmental performance between Finnish and Russian road freight transportation companies".

Structure and logic of the text flow.

The structure of the text submitted complies with research questions settled for the study.

Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.

The theoretical part (chapter 1 – Literature Review, except 1.5) is really good. The author clearly and logically expose the categories of operational performance and sustainable (environmental) performance, makes proper projections of these categories for the supply chains, outlines the problem of interrelation between operational performance and sustainable (environmental) performance. The empirical part of the study should be praised for the database collected. Unfortunately, statistical analysis is rather technical and it does not utilize the potential benefits of rich data collected by the author. Separate question is about the

choice of functional form of the relationships studied. Surprisingly, the author does not try to use multiplicative form (Cobb-Douglass) which is, at least, has better economic interpretation of the parameters as compared with a linear functional form. Besides that I do not see any strong reasons to confine the analytical models to 2 factor (input) – single output relationship.

Quality of data gathering and description.

As mentioned above data collected for empirical part of the study is with no doubt is a strong merit of the work. Technically speaking the analysis is completed at good theoretical level, however, it appears to be inappropriate with regard to the analysis of relationship between operational performance and supply chain sustainability because of the subjective nature of the data. The author refers to the Chan's definition of performance measurement (p.11. – Performance measurement is a process of quantifying the effectiveness and efficiency of actions. (Chan, 2003)), but at the same time the data analyzed can be hardly treated as the one reflecting effectiveness and efficiency of actions of the logistic companies in question. The list of variables bring forth a lot of questions. For instance, dependent variables Y3–Providing higher customer satisfaction ratings and Y4–Lowering customer complaints (percentage of total sales), treated as operational performance metrics evidently are 2 different indicators describing the same dimension of the logistics provider performance, namely, customer's satisfaction with the services. Thus, there is no big surprise that linear regressions (at pp. 29-30 and p.31, respectively):

Providing higher customer satisfaction rating =

$$-8,960 - 0,740 * \text{Minimization of the consumption of the non - renewable resources}$$

$$+ 2,429 * \text{Decreased consumption of hazardous, harmful, toxic materials} + \varepsilon$$

and

Lowering customer complaints (percentage of total sales) =

$$-4,887 - 0,346 * \text{Minimization of the consumption of the non - renewable resources}$$

$$+ 1,722 * \text{Decreased consumption of hazardous, harmful, toxic materials} + \varepsilon$$

yield similar results.

Practical/applied nature of research.

Taking in account the nature of data and analytical tools applied I would argue that analysis of the data is insignificant from managerial point of view, although it is of some minor interest for the practitioners.

Quality of thesis layout.

It is high. The only drawback is the absence of formulas' numbering

Master thesis of Mariia Valerievna Murasheva meets the requirements of the Master in International Business program, and according to the reviewer's opinion deserves a good (B) grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

June 13, 2015

Referee: Associate Professor



Yuri V. Fedotov