

REFEREE'S REVIEW

Program:	Master in International Business
Student:	Alina Verbenchuk
Title of thesis:	Determinants of adoption of global travel metasearch engines

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.	5	-	-	-
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.	-	-	3	-
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.	-	4	-	-
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	-	4	-	-

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.

- Relevance of the research topic has been convincingly described.
- The research gap has been identified in a clear way.
- The aim and the tasks of the thesis have been clearly explained and fully correspond to the research topic.

Structure and logic of the text flow.

- All the research steps have been carefully and convincingly explained in the thesis. Research hypotheses have been tested in a qualitative interview performed by the candidate.
- Although e-business has international characteristics *per se*, the international aspect of the research project has not been defined with sufficient clarity. The candidate insists on including foreign residents to the pool of respondents with the objective "to investigate if there are any distinctive patterns" (p.39) but no conclusions on country-specific determinants are made on this basis.

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

- The analytical approach is adequate to the research objectives, although theories of technology acceptance are presented only briefly.
- It has not been sufficiently explained why *facilitating conditions* of the UTAUT framework model (that is the degree to which organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support the system) are not relevant to the study. As pointed by the author, technical infrastructure is available on web/mobile applications.

However, the thesis does discuss other factors that could be important for the e-commerce development (i.e. level of Internet penetration or the development of online banking in Russia).

Quality of data gathering and description.

- The data pool is biased as the survey has been distributed via social networks (that means that only active Internet users have been considered), and also via personal contacts of the author. At the same time, the author intends to perform a “simple random sample“ (p. 38), and states that “the research is not focusing on early adopters or innovators, but states the general question of adoption for the whole massive of users” (p. 39).
- Concentrating the data pool on young and active Internet users (who are, in most cases, metasearch engine users) shifts the focus of the study away from the problem of technology adoption to that of customer loyalty.

Scientific aspect of the thesis.

- The overall research framework has been explained in a clear and convincing way. However, the empirical part is based on only one qualitative interview and a questionable data pool.

Practical/applied nature of research.

- The author demonstrated ability to discern relevant managerial problems.
- However, practical recommendations related to technology adoption raise doubts given the biased data pool.

Quality of thesis layout.

- The criterion is globally achieved despite some minor misprints in the text.
- In the Russian abstract the term *адаптация* is erroneously used for *adoption*.
- The text is visibly assembled from previous papers. Some paragraphs need to be updated following the conclusion of the project (i.e. on p. 38 the candidate states that “According to approximate estimations the data collection should not take longer than one week”).

Master thesis of Alina Y. Verbenchuk meets the requirements of the Master in International Business program, and according to the reviewer’s opinion deserves a “good (C)” grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date: June 12, 2015

Referee: *PhD, Ass. prof. Olga L. Garanina*



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