

REFeree'S REVIEW

Program:	MITIM
Student:	Kovalenko Ksenia
Title of thesis:	Key factors influencing Russian users' decision to participate in online auctions

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.	<u>5</u>	4	3	2
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.	5	<u>4</u>	3	2
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.	5	<u>4</u>	3	2
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	<u>4</u>	3	2
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.	<u>5</u>	4	3	2
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.	<u>5</u>	4	3	2
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	5	<u>4</u>	3	2

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:

Online auction platforms are very popular abroad, but are still used only by a limited number of Internet users in Russia. Master thesis is devoted to identifying the key factors influencing Russian users' decision to participate in online auctions was successfully achieved. The thesis incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. Extensive and well-structured overview of the topic is provided (Appendix 1, Appendix 3). Language of the thesis is fluent. The author has developed some practical managerial recommendations based on the results of the research. Overall impression of the thesis is positive.

But there are also some drawbacks.

It is not clear from the text, whether the goal of the research (to unveil the factors influencing Russian users' decisions to participate in online auctions) is achieved. Figure 23 Research results (from Section 3.4. Findings and discussions) demonstrates different factors, which influence "Y1 Spending (money) limit", while "Willingness to participate in online auctions" is not linked with all these factors and has only one solid link with "Confidence in Foreign e-stores". The text also does not shed light on it: "study on the online auction market in Russia revealed five factors, which determine the current state on e-commerce in general, and online auctions in particular... These factors incorporate Russian users' perception of the e-commerce in Russia". But it is not clear whether there is any relationship between "users' perception of the e-commerce in Russia" and "willingness to participate in online auctions".

Non-clear division between author's own contribution and existing body of knowledge, examples:

Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 with statistic data which are the basis of overview of Russian users' attitude towards e-auctions – whether these are the results of author's own survey or external data? Sometimes the author links the figures with own survey: "According to the survey conducted within the scope of this research, the political situation does really influence the Russian users' decision to buy or sell

items in the certain e-stores or from the certain vendor (in case of C2C online platforms) (Figure 7)", but mostly not. Also the author states "The third chapter represents the empirical part of the research" (but the aforementioned figures are in chapter 2).

Reference list is not formatted properly – different formats of citation are used.

Strange layout choices – small, but important table "Plan for empirical research" is sent to Appendix.

Data collection is an important part of this thesis, so it is worth to provide questionnaire form in the Appendix.

Some problems with thesis layout, e.g. the author writes "20 variables were proposed (Appendix 10)", while Appendix 10 has different content.

Master thesis of Kovalenko Kseniia meets the requirements of the MITIM program, and according to the reviewer's opinion deserves a *good (B)* grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

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Referee:

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