

REFeree'S REVIEW

Program:	MITIM
Student:	Shchukina Sofia
Title of thesis:	Online-purchasing of airplane e-tickets: socio-demographic impact

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	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	4	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	4	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	4	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.	5	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.	5	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	4	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:

The goal of this research is to analyse the impact of social-demographic factors on consumer behaviour in the online-purchase of airplane e-tickets. The Internet has become the channel whereby travel suppliers can sell their products and services to potential travellers at anytime and anywhere. The development of information technology has caused a radical change in the way the tourism industry does business. Currently, online airplane ticket purchases are a common and usual practice for travellers. The use of the internet as a channel for sales and finding information has enabled consumers to have more control and consider a wider range of products and prices (Ho & Lee, 2007). Demography and culture represent a set of shared values that influence social perceptions, attitudes, preferences and responses and it is an influential aspect in creating a favourable climate for developing of airplane e-tickets transactions. So the topic is novel and forms an interesting research setting.

Three tasks were set in this research: identification of the factors influencing the online-purchase customer behaviour, description of the competitive landscape of Russian airplane e-tickets market, and the empirical research to make recommendations to e-tickets services.

The theoretic part investigates the analysis of online-shopping consumer behaviour paying attention on external determined by seller and internal factors determined by customer. Literature review concludes with the research gap statements. It should be noted that we can't agree with author's statement that "articles about airline industry perceive the flight as an object, not thinking about tickets as a product, but for web-sites, that are nor represented by airlines, product is a tickets. This service is so specific, that some factors that are traditionally named as important for customer's choice can't be used for the analysis." (spelling of the author, page 20). For example, previous research has grouped products based on search, experience and credence (Nelson, 1970, 1974). In the context of Internet, Peterson et al. (1997) proposed a relevant classification system for classifying products for online. For the purpose of study, four products (Books, E-tickets, Insurance and Computers) have been considered based on Peterson et al. (1997) to evaluate consumer's attitude towards online shopping. Zuroni, M. J., & Goh, H. L. (2012) continued this research. Renny et al. (2013) investigated perceived usefulness, ease of use, and attitude towards online shopping usefulness towards online airlines ticket purchase. Ruiz-Mafe et al. (2013) investigated cross-cultural key drivers of consumer purchase of airline tickets. And we can continue this list.

The second chapter "The analysis of e-tickets services in Russia" starts with setting without any argumentation the target industry segment - direct purchase services that are represented by such Russian companies as Onetwotrip.com, Anywayanyday.com, Biletix.ru, Pososhok.ru, Agent.ru (page 22-23). There is no discussion why other common types of services and marketplaces are not included in this research. For example, airline company's web-sites, metasearch engines. Surprisingly on the page 27 author states quite opposite decision: "We took direct ticket sellers as an object of research, but to be more precise in our findings we decided not to speak about the whole industry, but to provide analysis and recommendations to several companies. We think, that this approach can make the results of research more applicable." After author compares e-tickets services of 3 Russian companies using comparison factors that are not directly linked to the research objective. Normally the SWOT analysis is used for such purposes. No conclusion is made at the end of the second chapter.

The third chapter "Empirical study on social-demographic impact" contains the research methodology and the result of empirical study. It is stated that the google form with survey questions was distributed in social networks (page 34) without differentiation of these social networks. Surprisingly the needed number of respondents (600?) was achieved in 2 days. It is not clear how author could achieve such speed for gathering data about certain Russian companies, and how the final results are related with these companies.

Thesis layout contains blank pages, spelling mistakes, different formatting, some typos and useless spaces. Chicago author-date style for references is partly missing.

Master thesis of Shchukina Sofia partly meets the requirements of the MITIM program, and according to the reviewer's opinion deserves a satisfactory D grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

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Referee:
Associate professor



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