

## REFEREE'S REVIEW

<b>Program:</b>	Master in Management (MIM)
<b>Student:</b>	Dvoryaninova, Yulia S.
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Choosing logistics service suppliers: customers' perspective in benchmarking container terminals

<b>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>
<b>Structure and logic of the text flow.</b> Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.	<b>5</b>
<b>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>
<b>Quality of data gathering and description.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>
<b>Scientific aspect of the thesis.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>
<b>Practical/applied nature of research.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>
<b>Quality of thesis layout.</b> Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	<b>5</b>

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:

*Please, elaborate on the above mentioned criteria (about 250 words)*

The issue of selecting a logistics service provider being multifaceted is among those which generate endless debates with broad scope of arguments. The master thesis under review specifies the selection of logistics service provider as the problem of port selection from the freight-forwarders perspective. The aim of the thesis and its objectives are clearly defined and well aligned.

The theoretical and empirical parts are well balanced and look properly elaborated: the author provides an extensive literature review on the stated topic. A thorough literature survey provides many-sided overview of the stated topic of the port selection. Indeed, the perspective of freight forwarders is underexplored in the literature, and yet one can hardly find a tool for customers' benchmarking of ports.

The author applies the computer-based program for solving the problem of a port choice for the customer with specific preference over the set of port's attributes. Eventually, after identification of the customer preferences is done the solution for each type of customer preferences has been elaborated. However, the consumers' clusterization appears to be a weak chain of the study because of small sample.

In general, the thesis of Yulia Dvoryaninova demonstrates successful application of advanced technique and to solving practical choice problem on the basis of non-numeric, non-precise and non-

complete information which allows to take into account wide variety of attributes that characterize both a subject (consumer – freight-forwarder) and an object (supplier – port) in the context of selecting the logistic service provider problem.

The managerial implications are also significant both for customers and players of the maritime industry.

At the same time, there are several remarks:

- The sample of answers allowed to come up with 5 types of customers' preferences. Higher rate of respondents' answers would allow for more solid justification for the separation of customers' types.
- Several port attributes were excluded during the research (p. 44). The question is – would those attributes, which were initially supposed to be included in the research, influence the result?
- The thesis would benefit a lot if the author could outline applicability of developed approach to other cognate logistics services and providers. Particularly, it would be desirable to consider similar problem with regard to Terminal and Warehouse Complex of Russian Railways.

Master thesis of Yulia S. Dvoryaninova meets the requirements of the Master in Management program, and according to the reviewer's opinion deserves a/an "excellent (A)" grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

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Referee:



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