

REFEREE'S REVIEW

Program:	Master in International Technology and Innovation Management
Student:	Vasily Akulov
Title of thesis:	Russian Market Entry Decision for an E-Business Company, the Case Ampparit Inc.

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.			3	
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.			3	
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.			3	
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.			3	

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = poor.

Additional comments:

The paper is written on a quite interesting topic: internationalization of e-business. Unfortunately there are no aims (except one in abstract, which, I must pay tribute to author, fully corresponds with the topic) or tasks (except to research questions in introduction (p.8)), but it seems that author wanted to find optimal solution for entering Russian market for Finnish e-business company. According to the author, the best solution would be "organization of daughter company" (p. 39) (what is daughter company?) which means to open Limited Liability Company (p. 77) and it is universal solution for any e-company (p. 8). Leaving aside the depth of this conclusion, I have to note, that pretty evident for e-business option "if you operate on e-market and sell e-services, you have no urgent need for physical entry of any foreign market, because there are no borders on the web" wasn't mentioned in the paper at all. That is why it is hard to evaluate both an ability to formulate research problem or adequacy of objectives.

Research method, chosen by the author – 5 interviews of 5 different companies, including Ampparit. Probably, this is appropriate method, but the author didn't try to prove it (for instance, by providing links to similar research). 4 out 5 interviews are, at least, strange: why these particular companies were chosen? It seems the main criteria for choosing the company was an ability of the author to reach anybody in this company. However, main weakness at this part is that just one out of sixteen questions on the interview was about Ampparit product. All other questions were very general (and no expert interviews were needed for it). Theoretical research wasn't made at all. Author explains it in following way: "literature about FOM is written in large amount, however, this literature covered subjects which are

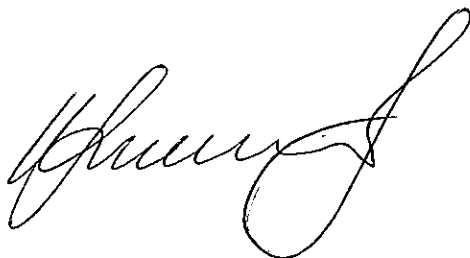
related to the classical business”. Probably, it is because e-business doesn’t need to worry about any (or at least specific) entry modes?!

The structure and logic of the paper is, probably, the only apparent advantage. I find it very clear. However, non of theses was logically proven. For instance, the author provides theoretical and managerial contributions (p.79). Writing about theoretical contribution, the author writes that the “research is unique in terms of theoretical contribution as it provides top management with valuable knowledge how to enter Russian market”. Main managerial contribution is that recommendation was made for particular company. I suppose, that the paper doesn’t have any significant conclusions, all results are extremely weak, unclear and not convincing. The “list of advises” (p. 77 in the text form or p. 78 in form of picture with identical plot) is so simple, that I don’t see any reasons for making research to get them. The most surprising thing in this list is that business plan for entering new market the author recommend to write after (!) choosing foreign operations mode and location (probably for the office). I wonder, why the author didn’t make any attempt to conduct simple SWOT and PEST analyses, that would give him minimum opportunity to prove his conclusions?!

Instead of doing it, more than half of the paper he devotes to unnecessary and simple description of entry modes, e-business types, risks, etc. No comparative analyses (as well as other forms of analyses) of entry modes or e-business types were found. The text is full of mistakes. For instance, the major for this paper abbreviation FOM means both foreign operation modes and foreign operation methods. A good illustration of mistakes in the text is the abstract, both in English and Russian language. The paper itself is not accurate. All the pictures and graphs are copied in different format from other sources. There are no tables in the paper.

Master thesis of Valisly Akulov meets the requirements of MITIM program, and deserves a satisfactory grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Referee



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