SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business
Student:	Daniil Barkalov
Title of thesis:	Reforming Railway Cargo Transportation: The Russian Way Compared with International Experience

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.

In global economy the transportation issues are extremely significant being critical for the companies' performance. The monopolistic market structure of railway industry being an obstacle for economic efficiency is the central point of ongoing reforms in the railway industry all over the world. Therefore, it is of special interest to compare the reforms of national railways.
The research goal is formulated by the author in a rather vague in regard to topic in the title. Surprisingly, the Introduction does not contain research questions addressed in the study.

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.

The structure of the text submitted complies with research topic for the study. The theoretical part could be expanded with a description of Data Envelopment Analysis methodology employed for efficiency assessment of reforms and argumentation for its use in the study. Empirical part of the thesis is diffused in the second half of the text according to the logic of the study.

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.

Since the objective of the study is formulated in a very generic way, it may be argued that it was covered adequately. The student, undoubtedly, has demonstrated ability to formulate and convey the research problem and used relevant research method to accomplish the task of comparing the efficiency of reforms.

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.

The data collected for the study is not sufficient for full scale quantitative analysis, however, it provides a possibility to apply advanced quantitative models. The literature list is relevant and sufficiently complete.

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.

An attempt to apply DEA methodology for benchmarking of reforms in railway industry appears to be productive idea. Though, there are a number of aspects of DEA model application that need to be more elaborated than it is done in the text (selection of the input and output variables, interpretation of the efficiency measure and results obtained, selection of a particular DEA model, etc.), the results produced are of certain interest and look quite appropriate. It is worth mentioning that they are creatively used for getting final conclusions on efficiency of reforms in different countries.

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.

The paper is mostly of theoretical nature. The findings provide challenging background for further research in the area comparative analysis of efficiency of reforms of national railways in different directions (expanding the list of variables, explanation and interpretation of the scores).

Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.

Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation. The tables, figures, and

references are done according to the standards of the Regulations for master thesis preparation.Unfortunately, there are quite a number of misprints in the text.

The Master thesis of Daniil Barkalov meet the requirements for master thesis of Master in International Business program, thus, the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date: June 16, 2011

Scientific Advisor: Associate Professor Yuri V.Fedotov