

REFeree's REVIEW

Program:	Master of International Business (MIB)
Student:	Zubkova Liudmila
Title of thesis:	Service desk knowledge mapping: the case of an international airport

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 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = poor.

Additional comments:

Knowledge mapping can be a powerful managerial tool that may help to improve organizational processes and thus contribute to the quality of the product/service. Taking into account the dramatic shifts that have happened in the understanding of the role and value-added provided by in-house IT services, such services in many organizations are in need for re-organization and improvement of internal processes. Knowledge mapping can be a useful tool for these purposes. Therefore, the topic of the current thesis is relevant for contemporary in-house IT services. However, a number of critical comments arise from this particular study.

Literature review/theoretical background:

The literature review could have benefited from clearer explanation of the key concepts and terms. In some sections the author acknowledges that there are several approaches to the particular concept, but does not specify which approach was chosen for this particular thesis. The author talks about knowledge management (KM), IT service management (ITSM), IT infrastructure library (ITIL) and IT governance, but does not clarify the interrelations among these concepts.

Another important concern refers to lack of explicitly stated implications of analysed sources for the topic of this particular thesis – after reading some sections (e.g., 1.1.), the reader is left alone with “So what?” question.

Also, the thesis would have benefited from vast literature on services and specific challenges in managing them.

Structure and the logic of the text flow:

Some parts of the text represent quite unstructured flow of thought (e.g., chapter 1.1). Also, some parts of the text are not well linked to each other.

Research methodology and design:

Main concerns are related to this part of the work. Research methodology is not justified enough. It remains unclear

- How respondents for interviews and focus groups were selected?
- How many respondents were interviewed? (and what is the profile of the sample)?
- How many focus groups were held, how they were organized?
- How story-telling is different from in-depth interviews in this particular thesis?
- Whether opinions of top- and middle-managers are representative enough for the study of the everyday processes in the organizations, and thus to which extent findings based on them are reliable and valid?

All these issues raise serious concerns to the claimed validity and generalizability of the study. While this study seems to be relevant for the case organization, its' practical applicability for other organizations is questionable. It is necessary to acknowledge that the author tried to address these issues in the section 3.4., however, the thesis would have significantly benefited if the questions mentioned above were clearly addressed as well.

To summarize, Master thesis of Zubkova Liudmila meets the requirements of Master of International Business (MIB) program, and deserves a "good" grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

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