

REFEREES' REVIEW

Program:	Master in Management
Student:	Anvar Babaev
Title of thesis:	Critical success factors in European football industry: the resource-based view perspective

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 solutions; 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 problems/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 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:

The thesis is devoted to football clubs' strategy development, which is currently considered an interesting and topical question, given the increasing value of the sport and in particular football industry. The author seeks to "identify multidimensional factors that contribute to achievement and/or sustainment of football clubs' competitive advantages", and thoroughly explains in his work why the resource-based view theory is the best fit for this research purpose. The topic, aim and main objectives are well interconnected with each other. Moreover, the author dedicates substantial efforts to identifying possible combinations of resources and capabilities' composition, which is of high interest for industry specialists.

The structure of the thesis is well developed. The author begins with underlining specifics of football industry and football clubs' management, pointing out their resources and capabilities mentioned in previous academic works. Further, a clear explanation of reasons to choose the resource-based view for particular research problem is presented. The link between theoretical and practical parts of thesis is adequate.

The author uses top 50 European football clubs as a sample for the research which represents benchmarks in football management and cover several geographical markets making the value of analysis higher. Invitation of a football expert adds validity to the choice of resources and capabilities that are further used in the research. The research has both qualitative and quantitative tools and methods which makes methodology and data collection process comprehensive enough. The list of references is sufficient however several recent papers focused on most recent sport management researches could be added for better general overview of the industry and its development.

A scientific thinking in approaching the research problem is present. The author pays substantial attention to identification of multidimensional resources and capabilities of football clubs. He looks into different resource combinations to demonstrate how they contribute to competitive advantage achievement oppose to resources used on their own.

The stated research problem and achieved results are relevant for both Russian and international football industries. The author successfully proves that football clubs strategy based solely on contracting players with high market value is inefficient. In order to achieve success football club should focus on accurate assessment of primary football player's performance on the field of play as well as develop loyal relationships with fans which are major stakeholders of each football clubs.

To my assessment master thesis of Anvar Babaev meets the requirements of Master in Management program and deserves an excellent grade and the author should be given the desired degree.

Best regards,



Anna Manaeva
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