

REVIEW OF THE BACHELOR'S THESIS EXTERNAL REVIEWER

Student's name: Elisabeth Ben Thabetova

Thesis title: Information and Communication Technology. The Case of Italy

Name of the thesis external reviewer: Ing. Lukas Maslo, PhD.....

	1	2	3	4
Assessment of the topic itself (irrespectively of the student):				
1.1 To what extent is the topic current and significant?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 How challenging is the topic in respect of theoretical knowledge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 How challenging it in respect of practical experience or fieldwork?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 How difficult is it to get background materials?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Verbal assessment (several sentences), in particular:

Subsection 1.4: Getting the data required the knowledge of the Italian language which is a skill of the author that needs to be especially appreciated and acknowledged.

2. Evaluation of the thesis structure and logical cohesion:

2.1 To what extent is the thesis structure logical and transparent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 To what extent does the author use current / suitable sources?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 How properly did the author select methods in respect of the topic?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 How sufficiently and functionally did the author use in the thesis original charts, tables, data, annexes, etc.?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 What is the compatibility level for the thesis basic line elements: topic – thesis assignment – objective – structure - conclusions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Verbal assessment (several sentences), in particular:

Subsection 2.5: I can see a certain shift in the focus when I take a look at the Final Thesis Assignment and the thesis itself. While the author intended to “investigate the relation between a negative total factor productivity growth rate of Italy and its level of ICT at the beginning of the current century”, she does not pay much attention to this topic in the thesis. Which is all right because the topic always undergoes some development as the author penetrates the topic and his interest is moving to different aspects of the topic. The Abstract is good. However, if I compare the Introduction and the Conclusion, both of them should have been linked to the central hypothesis of the thesis more closely (I will provide the details in the following section).

3. Assessment of the thesis text quality:

3.1 How well – in terms of depth and quality – did the author

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Note: Classification method: 1 = exceptional, 2 = very good, 3 = good, 4 = failed.

analyze the topic?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Did the author formulate the thesis objective clearly and with logical structure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Did the author fulfill the defined thesis objective and approved assignment of the thesis that contains the objective?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 How well – in terms of depth and quality – did the author cover the theoretical part of the thesis?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5 How well – in terms of depth and quality – did the author cover the practical / analytical part of the thesis?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6 To what extent are the thesis conclusions logically structured and show quality, and what is their added value?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Verbal assessment (several sentences), in particular:

Subsection 3.1: The author shows her close familiarity with the topic and proves that she mastered the topic at a high level.

Subsection 3.2: Unfortunately, the central hypothesis (a significant correlation between investments in ICT and organizational changes) seems to me as not expressed clearly enough in the Introduction. As for the central hypothesis, the Introduction limits itself to a laconic statement: “[...] and attention will be focused on the interaction between ICT and organizational changes.” (p. 9). The Abstract is more explicit about this: “The practical part underlines Italy’s late in comparison to rest of the European countries and formulates a hypothesis based on the researches made in 2002 by Bresnahan, Brynjolfsson and Hitt around organizational changes within firms. The results of the research suggest that there is a significant interaction between investments in ICT and organizational changes and that these variables are complementary. Output is positively affected by implementation of ICT together with organizational changes; however, when occurring alone, ICT investments and organizational changes have low and negative impact on output.” (p. 4) When the author comes to the part where she interprets the results of her regression model, especially the variable *orch* and *orchict*, which represents the evidence of the central hypothesis, the author does not put enough emphasis on this fact. Apart from that, the author suggests another hypothesis to be present in her thesis, covered in chapter 3: “The third chapter will analyse the diffusion of ICT in Italy from an empirical point of view and through the comparison of the data with other European economies, answering the hypothesis question of what is influencing Italian economy from the perspective of ICT investments of firms in different industrial sectors, size, and locations.” (p. 9). I can’t find this alternative hypothesis mentioned in the Abstract, though. Actually, I don’t understand what this alternative hypothesis really says.

Subsection 3.3: I can see a certain shift in the focus when I take a look at the Final Thesis Assignment and the thesis itself. While the author intended to “investigate the relation between a negative total factor productivity growth rate of Italy and its level of ICT at the beginning of the current century”, she does not pay much attention to this topic in the thesis. On the other hand, the central hypothesis of the thesis (a significant correlation between investments in ICT and organizational changes) does not appear in the assignment. Which is all right because the topic always undergoes some development as the author penetrates the topic and his interest is moving to different aspects of the topic. As I argue in 3.1, the objective or central hypothesis is not specified explicitly enough in the Introduction. But, with respect to the objective as it is stated in the Abstract, the author did fulfill the objective of the thesis.

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Subsection 3.4:

Subsection 3.5: I would only mention a few things that I was missing here. First, in chapter 4, how many firms did the sample consist of? Second, there should be some basic characteristics of the sample with respect to at least some of the variables (average, median, minimum, maximum, relative frequency functions etc.). Third, I didn't find any tests of the regression model – the author herself mentions autocorrelation, heteroskedasticity etc. – which are usually provided in works which present a regression models. Fourth, why did the author decide to analyze exactly the time span 1997-2003?

Subsection 3.6: The Conclusion is very badly balanced. The first half of the Conclusion just sums up chapters 1 and 2 where the author does not state to create any added value. It is hard to recognize where exactly the Conclusion starts summing up the conclusions of chapter 3 and 4. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Italy, so, the occurrence of the word "Italy" could be a landmark to the reader but this word does not appear in the Conclusion at all. It is only with the sentence: "In other words, for a technology implementation to be successful, it has to be equilibrated and harmonious with the corporate structure." (p. 48), that I realized that the author is most probably referring to her central hypothesis. But there is no mention of Italy or manufacturing sector or data. Also, the limits of the research that the author states in the last paragraph of the Conclusion, should be present at a different place, the Methodology section would be best. The last paragraph of the Conclusion should focus on the added value of the results because this is the paragraph which everyone is going to read, whoever will ever check out this thesis (actually, any thesis).

4. Assessment of the thesis form and style:

- | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1 What is the formal layout of the thesis? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.2 What is the quality of citations and references? Are sources identifiable? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.3 What is the stylistic level of the thesis, particularly the use of correct economic terminology? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Verbal assessment (several sentences), in particular:

Subsection 4.2: Wherever it is possible, the reference in the text should also content the page, e. g. Schreyer (2001, p. 23) etc.

Subsection 4.3: Italy's late – did the author mean "lag"?

5. Overall assessment (*It is necessary to state, whether the thesis meets the requirements of the Methodology of the Faculty of Economics in terms of the quality of contents, scope and formal requirements, whether the thesis is/is not recommended for defense. It may also be nominated for a special award, etc.):*

The author shows her close familiarity with the topic and proves that she mastered the topic at a high level. Both the level of scientific discourse and the level of presentation are adequate to a final thesis at the Faculty of Economics. I recommend this thesis for the oral defense.

6. Questions and remarks to the defense:

1. The author states that she draws an inspiration from Bresnahan, Brynjolfsoon and Hitt (2002). Could the author explain how she was influenced by this paper?

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2. Could the author explain whether there is really another hypothesis as I expressed myself in Section 3.2?

Proposed grade: excellent

Date: 30. 01. 2017Signature of the Thesis External Reviewer

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