KLAIPĖDOS UNIVERSITETAS

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MASTER'S THESIS IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Methodological book

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Recommended for students and teachers of Master's studies in management, business, marketing, and health-care management studies, this methodical book should help prepare Master's theses to the same standard, and develop scientific research work skills, students' independence, and a culture of work formalisation.

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INTRODUCTION

Master's studies are studies that provide a second-level qualification degree and are intended to prepare a student for independent scientific work, the performance of which requires scientific knowledge and relevant abilities. A Master's thesis is analytical, based (taking into account the investigative or applied nature of the Master's science) on independent scientific or applied research. It should not be merely descriptive, or an overview. In the final thesis, the Master's student must demonstrate an ability not only to analyse the chosen topic, to evaluate the work done by others in the field, and to successfully conduct research in that field, but also to formulate research conclusions clearly and logically, and to describe the research work in accordance with the approved requirements. The topic of the Master's thesis is usually combined with the research area of the department. The length of the Master's thesis is 100,000 to 150,000 characters (50 to 75 pages). Master's degree programmes are registered and conducted by Klaipėda University according to the field of management studies: Business Management, Health Care Management (together with the Department of Public Health), and Master's degree programmes in Marketing.

The purpose of the Master's programme in Business Management is to prepare qualified specialists for the career of a scientist, researcher or educator, who would be able to engage in practical activities at the highest level of management in any business organisation. The purpose of the health-care management programme is to train highly qualified management specialists who are familiar with and know how to apply scientific research methods, who are able to manage health-care organisations, and create health care programmes and implement them (Stašys, Šimanskienė, 2011).

The Master's final thesis must be based on the analysis, synthesis and critical evaluation of scientific work corresponding to the chosen topic in the management field; independent research, the ability to analyse and interpret the results, and to logically formulate research conclusions and recommendations. This methodical book is guided by Resolution No 30/10/2021. V-1776 'On the approval of the description of the field of study in Management', along with the description of the VII qualification level and the approved description of the Lithuanian qualification. When preparing the thesis, it is necessary to systematise and develop the knowledge obtained during the Master's degree and independent studies, and to conduct independent research. The work must solve a specific scientific or practical task (problem). For Master's students who have published at least one scientific article, one additional point is added to the evaluation when defending the thesis.

The aim of the Master's thesis in management is to identify and formulate a theoretically insufficiently explored management problem based on the theoretical knowledge of management science, to choose the appropriate research methods to solve it, to conduct the necessary research, and to create an intellectual product on the basis of those and an analysis of the scientific literature of management, where there would be at least one management direction in the scientific result not published in the literature: connections, regularity, a new management tool, or a new way of using management tools.

When writing, researching and defending a final thesis, a Master's student in the field of management studies must demonstrate basic abilities in scientific research work: 1) subject erudition, i.e. a broad theoretical knowledge of management science and a practical knowledge of organisations and process management, which would be sufficient to understand the relevance of the problem under consideration and to perform independent work; 2) methodological preparation, i.e. the ability to choose and apply research methods that match the nature of management scientific work; 3) theoretical preparation, i.e. the ability to find, analyse and systematise theoretical material in the area of management, and to be able to use it in solving the chosen problem; 4) analytical abilities, i.e. to purposefully collect, systematise and analyse practical organisation and process management data, and to use them to solve the problem under consideration; 5) communication skills, i.e. the ability to logically, persuasively and consistently argue one's statements; 6) clerical skills, i.e. the ability to comply with the requirements of the technical formalisation and logical sequence of scientific research work; 7) design skills.

The Master's final thesis (research paper) is consistently prepared throughout the entire period of the Master's studies. The work is supervised by a supervisor appointed by the department, who advises the student throughout the work process. The completed Master's thesis is presented for public defence and evaluated by a commission. The scientific research work is carried out according to the work plan agreed between the Master's student and the supervisor, corresponding with the selected topic, in accordance with the consistency presented below.

During the first semester, the Master's student describes and formulates an actual problem in the area of management that corresponds with the nature of the study programme which can be solved by conducting relevant research and applying theoretical knowledge. Based on the selected problems and the typical area of the work offered by the department, the topic of the Master's thesis is formulated, registered in the department, and signed by the supervisor. The work task of the Master's student is formulated (see Appendix 3). For the first semester report, it is necessary to collect the necessary scientific literature (classic works, monographs, scientific articles, other sources of information) that is suitable for examining the chosen topic or solving the problem (at least 40 sources from scientific literature, among which there should be at least ten foreign-country sources; publications older than ten years should not exceed 25% of all the sources); draw up a preliminary work plan and calendar work schedule for all semesters; and justify the choice of the topic of the Master's work (the problem to be examined, the possible goal of the work, and ways of achieving it). All scientific articles in PDF format and a bibliography with active references (DOI numbers) must be sent to the scientific guide. The work done during the first semester is defended publicly and evaluated collegially during the examination session of the department's teachers.

During the second semester, the Master's student must perform a detailed analysis of the theoretical literature from the field of management corresponding to the work topic, summarising, comparing and systematising the opinions of various authors in the context of the problem under consideration. When comparing the opinions of various authors, it is necessary to express a position. If, after analysing the theoretical part, it becomes clear that the selected problem is not relevant or new, the topic of the work can be adjusted after coordination with the supervisor. At the end of the theoretical part, there must be a clear theoretical result: hypotheses or defensive statements formulated (if necessary), a theoretical model created, comparative tables and criteria identified, etc. The work done during the second semester is publicly defended and collegially evaluated by the department's teachers during the exam session.

During the third semester, on the basis of accumulated theoretical knowledge, a theoretical model must be chosen (or created) to be used for this work which would define the interrelationships between phenomena. How the research will be conducted must be predicted based on the theoretical model. An accurate research methodology that would justify the scope and consistency of the research, as well as optional methods of data collection and analysis, must be prepared. Secondary information relevant to the topic being examined must be collected and summarised. It is necessary to describe how the principles of research ethics will be followed in the conduct of the study. The work done during the third semester is defended publicly and evaluated collegially by the department's teachers during the exam session.

During the fourth semester, an independent study and collection of data must be conducted. Only in very rare cases (taking into account the specifics of the topic) can the collection of primary data be replaced by an extensive study of secondary information. An empirical section of the paper must be written. The results of the primary research must be linked with secondary information and theoretical material, the latter supplemented based on the latest sources if necessary. A summary of each part of the work, conclusions and suggestions for the entire work must be formulated. The collected material must be organised in such a way that it meets the structure of the Master's work and the formalisation requirements of this work. The Master's thesis must be submitted on time. Theses that meet the requirements of Master's theses are defended publicly. They are evaluated by a dissertation defence commission approved by order of the rector.

1. THEME AND TOPIC

The Management department publishes the topics of Master's theses and guidelines for the research work during the first two weeks of the academic year. The topic may be related to business development, the creation of new businesses, the improvement of business organisational processes, the rationalisation of their management, the development of products and services, the evaluation of the services of state-owned enterprises, the solution of managerial problems in specific organisations, and others. The most important thing is that the work is dominated by solutions to problems in the area of management. The topic of the Master's thesis in management must correspond to the field of study, preferably to be coordinated with the research area of the department (Seilius, Juščius, 2004).

Students choose (formulate) the topic of their work and submit it to the department by 15 October of that year (or by 15 March, depending on the programme). Thesis topics and scientific guides chosen by students are considered and approved by the department by 30 October of that year. Approved topics are published in accordance with the 'Description of Internal Procedures of Klaipėda University' regulating the protection of personal data (On independent work of Klaipėda University students ..., 2020), and Master's students, in consultation with their supervisors, begin the preparatory work.

When choosing the topic, a Master's student should remember that it is one of the most important and responsible parts of preparing a research paper. In choosing a topic, each student must take into account scientific interests, understand the essence of the topic, its relevance and problematic, and be able to conduct research in a certain analysed direction. It is recommended to direct the topic of the work not at the process but at the result, so the words analysis, research, etc, are usually not appropriate in the title.

When choosing the topic, it is useful to think about whether there will be enough literature for the chosen topic, whether it will be possible to apply suitable methods of analysis, and how useful it will be for further studies. It is important to define the boundaries of the topic. The object of the research can be: socio-economic phenomena, relations between groups of people, or processes taking place in organisations. The topic of the research must be relevant and important to society, or a certain group or organisation in it, and it must correspond to the purpose and object of the research.

Examples of Master's thesis topics:

- 'Management solutions for reducing employee turnover in a logistics company'
- 'An evaluation of the quality of service by organisations providing accommodation services in the Klaipėda district'
- 'Improving the personnel management system in trading companies in the Klaipėda region'
- 'An assessment of internal communication in organisations'
- 'The implementation of principles of sustainable development in logistics companies'
- 'The correlation between organisational culture and organisational image'.

When choosing the title of the Master's thesis, it is recommended to think first of all about the problem of the research, and not about the topic. According to C. Osella and D. Jansen (2019), in order to choose the right topic, you need to take seven steps:

1. Understand the research process
2. View previous Master's theses (dissertations) from the university(ies)
3. Be familiar with the requirements of the university Master's thesis
4. Review academic literature to begin the process of generating ideas
5. Make a list of possible research questions (topics)
6. Narrow down (evaluate) the list of research topics
7. Choose a research topic (and don't change it later).

Thesis topics can be revised no later than two months before the registration of the thesis in the department. In order to clarify the topic, the student must write a request on behalf of the head of the department and get the approval of the scientific supervisor. The topic of the final thesis can be revised only with the permission of the head of the department.

2. WORK PLAN, TASK, MANUAL

2.1. Calendar work plan, research assignment

The department approves the general calendar work plans for the preparation of the Master's final thesis and publishes them for the students. The calendar work plan sets out the dates and times of the specific topics for the final thesis and the approval of the scientific thesis supervisor, the formulation and approval of the work task, and the consideration of the scientific or final thesis in the department. During the first consultation with the supervisor, the task of the final thesis, the purpose of the research, tasks and methods, and the calendar plan for the preparation of the thesis, must be discussed. When preparing the assignment, the Master's student must be completely clear about what will need to be researched, written and proposed. The thesis assignment, signed by the supervisor and the student, is approved on 30 October of that year.

2.2. The research supervisor

Only a teacher with a scientific degree has the right to supervise a research thesis for an MA in management. For each student, the department assigns a Master's thesis guide, with whom he coordinates and refines the chosen topic and work plan. The handbook recommends or indicates how to search for key scientific literature and sources. The student preparing the thesis must demonstrate how he is able to independently find the necessary scientific literature. The Master's student must himself formulate the research problem, goals and tasks, and describe the research methods. When coordinating the work plan, the supervisor only advises and helps find answers to the student's questions by collecting and analysing information.

Within 30 days of the approval of the topic, Master's students submit to the supervisor a plan for the content of the thesis, a list of basic literature, and a preliminary research programme. The supervisor reads the written scientific work, makes suggestions and comments, and decides whether the work prepared by the student meets the requirements for the work. All scientific articles *must* be sent to the scientific guide in PDF format and submitted in the bibliography with active references (DOI numbers). The student is responsible for the material presented in the research paper, the correctness of the calculations, the conclusions drawn, and the proposals presented. The student must consult regularly with the work supervisor, follow the calendar for the preparation of the work, inform the work supervisor about the course of the preparation of the work, and take into account the supervisor's advice and comments on the subject and the method.

The supervisor advises the student, answers questions relating to the thesis, discusses these issues, and makes comments. Students are recommended to consider the notes of the supervisor. Constant consultation with the supervisor is necessary, as it not only ensures the consistency and quality of the thesis, but also allows the supervisor to judge whether the student has conducted the research independently. The supervisor must obtain references to the questionnaires, research data (in Excel, SPSS or other programme format), and transcribed texts (if interviews were conducted), in order to ensure that the research was conducted fairly.

3. SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The scope of the Master's in Management thesis is 100,000 to 150,000 characters with spaces (50 to 75 pages). The extent of the final work is counted up to the appendices. The structure of the Master's in Management thesis should be: 1) title page; 2) cover letter; 3) work task; 4) summary in Lithuanian and foreign languages; 5) contents; 6) a list of illustrations, if applicable; 7) a list of tables, if applicable; 8) introduction; 9) theoretical part; 10) methodological part; 11) empirical part; 12) conclusions; 13) literature; 14) other sources of information, if applicable; 15) glossary; 16) accessories; 17) student publications.

The Master's in Management thesis begins with the title page (see Appendix 1), which must include the name of the university, the faculty and the department, an abbreviation for the academic group, the name and surname of the student (the author), the title of the work, the type of work, and the place and year of the preparation of the work. The cover letter (see Appendix 2) is a procedural requisite sheet that is filled out by the author of the thesis, the supervisor of the research work, and the head of the department. The cover letter is completed only after writing the entire work. The title of the work, the declaration of academic integrity, consent to use the thesis in the study process at Klaipėda University, the supervisor's permission to defend the thesis, the registration of the work in the department, the permission of the head of the department to defend the thesis, and the names and surnames of the reviewers, are indicated here.

The final task (see Appendix 3) is to indicate the supervisor's and student's surname, the title, purpose and tasks, the presentation of the thesis to the department, and the supervisor's consultation time. The thesis assignment is drawn up and signed by the supervisor and the student, and confirmed by the head of the department. The thesis assignment is made at the beginning of the first semester of the Master's studies.

3.1. Summary and table of contents

The summary (see Appendix 4) is written in Lithuanian and English. The texts of both summaries must be identical, only in different languages. At the beginning of the summary (10 pt letter size) the following must be indicated: author's last name and first initial; job title; study level, programme; scientific and pedagogical degrees, initials, surname of the supervisor; the university's name; the place of preparation (defence), date, length and number of attachments.

For example:

Surname V. Analysis of Klaipėda port development possibilities. Master's thesis in Business Management. Head of work Prof. Dr. P. Vardenis, Klaipėda University: Klaipėda, 2022. 70 pp., 12 appendices.

The summary (12 pt letter size) presents the scientific problems solved, the wording of the goal of the work, and essential aspects of the methodology, and highlights the essential results of the research conducted, the solutions, the main conclusions, and the proposals. The emphasis is placed on their practical use, or the possibility for such use. The length is up to 2,000 characters. At the end of the summary, in a separate paragraph, key words (up to six) are listed. Examples of key words: *logistics organisation, assessment, managers*. The summary follows the thesis assignment.

In the table of contents (see Appendix 5), starting with the introduction, all the names of chapters, sections and subsections are given, indicating the page number. The table of contents excludes the abstract, and lists of tables and figures, as this information is placed before the table of contents. The title of the table of contents is written like a chapter, in capital letters. The names of the sections in the contents are written in capital letters in bold, the sections in lower case, the subsections in lower case without highlighting. The titles of the chapters, sections and subsections must be concise and clear, and must correspond with the essence of the problem under investigation. Chapters, subsections and sections are numbered with Arabic numerals, separating the numbering with a full stop. The introduction, references, conclusions and appendices are not numbered in the table of contents.

Lists of tables and figures appear on the next page after the abstract. If there are a lot of tables and figures, the Master's student can submit a list of figures and a list of tables. The lists of figures and tables indicate the numbers, titles and page numbers of figures and tables.

3.2. Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to acquaint the reader with the problem raised in the work: its research, motivation, what and why the Master's student intends to examine in raising a specific problem, what the purpose and tasks of the work are, the object of the research, what methodology is applied, and what, in the student's opinion, is the scientific and practical significance of the work. It is important to write the introduction in such a way that after reading it, the reader can get an idea of the whole work.

The length of the introduction is up to three pages. The relevance of the chosen topic, the problem under consideration, the object of the work, the goal, the tasks, the research methods, the level of research of the problem (presenting a scientific discussion on the issue under consideration), the main works by scientists who have studied the problem, and the scope of the application of the work results, are described here.

The formulation of the thesis problem depends on the relevance of the topic. It is recommended to start the introduction with a description of the problem: how and why the problem arose, what the contribution of other researchers in examining it is, what needs to be solved, what has not been studied and should be studied, what the Master's student is starting to study (change), and why. After describing the problem, it is formulated in one sentence, which should reveal the essence of the entire work, why the work is being written, without forgetting the topic of the research work, to which it must be directly related. It is possible to formulate a scientific problem as a deficiency, an existing inconsistency, or to present it as a question. An example of the formulation of the research problem*: there is no suitable methodology for evaluating organisations providing accommodation services.* It has been observed that it is easier for graduate students to formulate a scientific problem with a problematic question. An example of a research problem in formulating a problematic question is: *how to evaluate the quality of services of organisations providing accommodation services?*

The subject of the thesis must define what is being researched. An object is a phenomenon, a subject of human cognition or activity. The object of the research is closely related to the name of the research and the purpose of the work. An example of an object is the quality of accommodation services from the user's point of view.

B. Bloom (1984) identified six levels of cognition: from basic recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through more complex ones to the highest level, which is called evaluation. He described each level of cognition with verbs:

- Knowledge: arrange, define, copy, mark, list, remember, list, organise, recognise, relate, remember, repeat, reproduce.
- Comprehension: categorise, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, specify, find, recognise, report, confirm, review, select, recalculate.
- Use: apply, select, demonstrate, use, illustrate, interpret, act, practise, predict, solve, use, write.
- Analysis: analyse, evaluate, calculate, classify, compare, criticise, differentiate, discriminate, separate, examine, experiment, question, test.
- Synthesis: prepare, collect, accumulate, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organise, plan, prepare, propose, write.
- Evaluation: prove, determine, add, select by comparison, justify, predict, calculate, confirm, evaluate.

The purpose of the work must correspond to the name of the chosen topic and reveal the object of the research. It must be clear and presented in one sentence. Often, graduate students incorrectly formulate the goal using verbs specific to the cognitive level of knowing, understanding, using or analysing. For research purposes, contact can be used only once.

Examples of a research objective:

- *After theoretically and practically analysing the reasons for employee turnover in a logistics company, to prepare recommendations for managerial decisions that will help reduce employee turnover.*
- *After determining the main criteria for the quality of accommodation services, to evaluate the quality of services provided by accommodation organisations in the Klaipėda district*.

Depending on the goal, specific tasks are set, which the student intends to examine in his work. They must reveal and detail the purpose of the work, so they can start with verbs describing the level of knowledge and understanding, and end with synthesis and evaluation. Taking into account the tasks, a work plan is prepared (not included in the introduction), according to which the content of the Master's thesis is compiled. The recommended number of tasks is four or five. Research tasks should be numbered, presenting each one on a new line. The purpose and tasks must be formulated using the general form of verbs: evaluate, determine, compare, prepare, present, check, compile, formulate, create, etc. Tasks must include theoretical, methodological, empirical and proposal (recommendation) parts.

Examples of work tasks:

- *Based on the scientific literature, to analyse the quality of services from a theoretical aspect.*
- *Identify the main criteria by which users define the quality of service in organisations providing accommodation services in the Klaipėda region.*
- *Justify the assessment methodology in Klaipėda district accommodation organisations.*
- *Assess the quality of services in Klaipėda district accommodation organisations*.

The introduction indicates the research methods used in the preparation of the Master's thesis. It is recommended to list and briefly describe them (for what purpose they are used). The main sources of literature and data used can be mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, i.e. what scientific, legal, statistical, sociological and other information was used, which briefly describes the research on the topic, mentioning the main researchers who have written on the chosen topic and their research findings.

The introduction describes briefly areas of the application of the work results and outlines the structure of the work. The limitations of the study may be provided, where the author states what problems he encountered while conducting the study. Here, it is usually indicated what difficulties the author experienced in collecting the scientific literature and conducting research, and why (if applicable) the original idea could not be completely fulfilled.

3.3. The main part of the work

The main part of the work consists of three (theoretical, methodological and empirical) chapters. There are chapters, sections and subsections. If the author decides to break down any section of the work, at least two subsections must be distinguished, and also if a subsection is broken down into at least two subsections. In addition, it should be remembered that the names of structural parts must be specified not only in the contents but also in the text.

It is advisable not to mince the main part of the thesis too much. Titles of chapters, sections and subsections must be concise, clear, meaningful, and, most importantly, correspond to the content. Names should not be repeated. It is not allowed for one of the work sections or subsections to repeat the title of the Master's thesis.

Each chapter of the main body should end with a summary of the material presented. It promotes the ability of scientific synthesis, forces to critically evaluate the research results, and formulates directions for further research. The chapter summary starts on a new line, and is separated from the main text by a single space. It should not exceed half a page. Thoughts should be put in a persuasive manner. The text should not be descriptive, but analytical-discursive in nature.

3.3.1. The theoretical section

The theoretical part must be analytical in nature. This chapter analyses the results of scientific research conducted in Lithuania and abroad, statistical data, and other important literature on the topic. The analysis is carried out by grouping scientific and other materials according to common questions of the topic under consideration, analysing concepts, theoretical models and their elements, highlighting contradictions observed, and presenting and comparing different views and arguments of the authors. Sources should not be included in the theoretical section if the works performed are not directly related to the Master's thesis, or the author does not understand those works. In this part of the work, the author must also present his opinion. The theoretical part presents scientific hypothesis(es). It is good if this part ends with a theoretical model (or other assumption) developed by the author, which will need to be tested in the practical part. The theoretical section cannot be separated from the methodological and empirical sections. The length should be 20 to 25 pages.

3.3.2. The methodological section

Before beginning to investigate any problem, the student should examine thoroughly the methods appropriate to the investigation. Research methods are methods for obtaining certain cognitive and practical information. The research methodology is presented, and its logic and the selection of information sources are indicated. In the research methodology, it is necessary to foresee how the model (or other system) created in the theoretical part is intended to be verified in the practical part. The Master's thesis must describe only the methods used in the research. The use of each method must be justified, and proven to provide reliable information. This part describes the justification of the questionnaires, the ethics of the research, the stages of the research, and the schedule. The length should be six to 11 pages.

During the research, certain information is collected, which, after analysis and evaluation, explains the causes of the changes, possible consequences, and expected ways to further implement these changes in the desired direction, or to adapt to their effects. For research to be successful, it is important to be controlled, precise, systematic, valid, verifiable, empirical and critical. Depending on the application of its results, scientific research can be fundamental or applied, exploratory, causal and descriptive, depending on the type of information collection, quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative methods examine texts, words, pictures and imaginary (subjective) things. Qualitative research methodologies are divided into several large groups: group surveys, in-depth interviews, and semi-structured interviews.

Data (information), grouped into primary and secondary, are necessary for conducting scientific research. Secondary data are information collected by other researchers, processed by certain methods, and already published. Data collected and published by the researcher using various research methods are primary data. Primary data are collected and analysed if secondary data are insufficient to achieve the research objective. Primary data can be collected through observation and survey methods. The Master's student must choose methods that allow for obtaining reliable research results and help solve the formulated scientific problem.

Quantitative (questionnaire survey) and qualitative (interviews, observation, secondary data collection [document content analysis], discussion groups) research methods are usually applied in the field of management science research. The most commonly used are questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. Observation is rarely used, due to its high time consumption: it can take twice as much time to enter the data as the observation itself (Janićijević, 2011).

Qualitative research methods

Monitoring (*observation*). This is the purposeful understanding of the organisation's environment and the processes within it. It is possible to observe the activities of people, the production process, and the movement of finances. In order for observation to lead to the expected results, two conditions are necessary: 1) the researcher's professionalism, experience, and ability to notice meaningful information; 2) knowledge of monitoring methods, and the ability to apply them. In order to successfully observe, certain conditions are necessary: the possibility for observation, the repetition of the phenomenon of interest to the observer, and its short-term nature. Observations include working time photography and timing. Working time photography is a method of observation in which all phenomena taking place in the monitored object are recorded for a certain period of time, such as a shift or a working day. Chronometry is a method of observation where the researcher observes a work process and registers all work movements to the accuracy of a second. This kind of study helps to determine the efficiency of the use of working time, and to predict the possibilities for improving the organisation of the work (Poviliūnas, 2003).

Interview. Although the purpose and the goals of the interview may vary, according to R. Tidikis (2003), this method is most often applied:

- to specify the research problem, hypotheses and their formulation;
- for preparing the methodology of wider surveys;
- as a self-contained method of information gathering with limited or small sampling;
- as an additional method to collect more detailed information along with questionnaires, observation and other methods;
- in control studies to clarify the data collected by other methods and to check their reliability.

According to S. Dugan and M.S. Maracine (2013), the advantage of the interview is its flexibility, and the possibility to expect specific answers to questions. Interviews are used to collect qualitative information. In order to successfully apply interviews, it is important to predict who will participate in the interview, and when, where and how the interview will take place. In addition, it is important to anticipate the questions that will be presented in the interview (Janićijević, 2011). Interviews can gather a lot of interesting information, but they take a lot of time and cost a lot. During the interview, the researcher can assess the tone of voice, response rate, posture, body language, facial expression and reactions, which is impossible to do when submitting questionnaires. When applying an interview, additional information can be obtained on the given question. Interviews allow the researcher to expect in-depth, context-related, open responses from research participants that express their views, opinions, feelings, knowledge and experience.

Document content analysis. A lot of information about managerial problems can be gathered by studying the documentary material of the organisation. It can be both internal documents and external printed information about the researched organisation (Ott, 1989; Šimanskienė, Sandu, 2013). In general, the document analysis method allows for reliable conclusions to be drawn after an objective and systematic examination of the features of a text.

The effectiveness of the use of documents in an investigation may depend on what documents are used and how they are used. Documents can provide useful information about the culture of the organisation and the people working in it, the execution of projects, and the personal attitudes and values of the subjects. Documents can be useful (Rupšienė, 2007):

- as the main data collection method (which may be supplemented by other data collection methods, such as interviews or observation);
- as an additional method of data collection (e.g. in the preparatory phase of the interview, preparing the questionnaire, or in the preparatory phase of observation, deciding what to observe);
- as one of the data collection methods.

Document collection as a data collection method is widely used in research, usually as an additional data collection method.

Discussion group. A focus group discussion is a qualitative method of data collection. It is an organised conversation-discussion among a small group of purposefully selected research participants, focused on a specific (broader or narrower) topic. It is a form of qualitative interview, as the discussion follows the guidelines of a pre-designed, semi-structured open-ended questionnaire (sometimes called a focus group discussion script). The discussion group discussion is led by the moderator; its purpose is a discussion between the research participants themselves. Research participants hear each other's answers, so they can add something, comment, or react to each other's emotions and statements, and not just answer the questions posed by the moderator (Gaižauskaitė, Valavičienė, 2016). The result of the discussion group discussion is not only verbal information; it also records the reactions of the research participants, consensus or conflicting opinions, common experiences or exceptional cases, and all non-verbal information that can be collected during the interview. The focus group method is usually applied when an interview or a conversation is conducted in a small group of people who share the same characteristics (Rupšienė, 2007).

Quantitative methods

The most popular research method used in social sciences is the *survey*. This is a research method that collects information about people's opinions, knowledge, beliefs, behaviour, etc. Sometimes a survey is described as a communication process that collects the primary data necessary for a study. A questionnaire is usually chosen for conducting a survey, the structure of which depends on the topic of the scientific work and the need for information to analyse of the problem. At the initial stage, it is recommended to create a plan-graph of the sequence of questions, which would include the answer options. The purpose of the questions is to get to know the phenomenon studied, to gather detailed information about the respondents' opinions.

The questionnaire can contain open and closed questions. Open-ended questions are not provided with possible answer options. Closed questions consist of: a) a stimulating part (questions that aim to arouse interest) and b) the answer part (possible answer options). The questions can be direct or indirect, as well as descriptive, relational and causal. The questionnaire has been prepared and verified by useful pilot studies, which allow for identifying the shortcomings of the questionnaire.

When planning a survey, it is important to determine the necessary minimum number of studies to draw statistically significant conclusions. First of all, the general set must be determined (the general set, or population, is the studied whole). Since the general population (if it is quite large) is not easy to study, pre-selection is almost always done, i.e. a random part of the elements of the general set is selected, called a sample. Although sampling methods are based on probability theory, it is impossible to completely avoid errors in sampling: random and systematic errors occur.

The size of the study group depends on the purpose of the study and the characteristics of the study population. If the researcher intends to process the collected data with statistical methods, the minimum number of cases should be at least a hundred. In order to obtain more accurate data, the reliability and accuracy of the research data should be assessed, i.e. mathematical statistical models applied, in other words, the sample volume to be calculated.

According to K. Kardel (2016), knowing certain results, it is easy to determine the sample volume by applying the formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot s^2}{\Delta^2}\ , \tag{1}$$

Where: n – the number of cases in the selection group. The z coefficient, found from the student's distribution tables, is chosen depending on the level of reliability we are aiming for. Confidence 95% is usually used in scientific work. Reliability (p = 0.05), so z = 1.96; s is the sample mean standard deviation. It is determined on the basis of previous studies, or from results obtained during a pilot study, when the average standard deviation of the sample is calculated according to the formula:

$$s = \frac{x_{\max} - x_{\min}}{k}\ , \tag{2}$$

Where: x_{max} – the maximum possible value of the attribute; x_{min} – the smallest value of the attribute; k – coefficient from special tables; for a large number of cases (more than 100), k = 6; in smaller cases, the student's distribution tables are used. In the absence of previous studies and if a pilot study is not possible, s = 50.

Δ (delta) - permissible inaccuracy, i.e. the difference between the sample group and the average of the general population, freely chosen based on data from previous studies and data accuracy requirements.

If the general set is finite, the number of cases is calculated according to the formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 * s^2}{\left(1 - \frac{1}{N}\right) * \Delta^2 + \frac{z^2 * s^2}{N}}, \tag{3}$$

where: N is the volume of the entire population.

This formula applies when data is expressed as a percentage. If quantitative measurements are taken:

$$n = \frac{z^2 * s^2}{\Delta^2 + \frac{z^2 * s^2}{N}}. \tag{4}$$

V.I. Paniotto's formula is popular among students:

$$n = \frac{1}{\Delta^2 + \frac{1}{N}}, \tag{5}$$

where: n – required number of respondents; Δ is the error, the standard error of the research is 0.05 with a probability of 0.954; N is the size of the entire population.

Before creating the questionnaire, it is important to predict what computer programs will be used to process the survey data. A specialised statistical program, such as SPSS, Statistica, MiniTab, Systat, Tableau, etc, is usually used to perform statistical analysis. Statistical analysis can be performed and visual material can be presented using the common Microsoft Excel program.

Today, a questionnaire is quite often submitted through online sites, where after completing the questionnaire, a link can be sent to the selected research participants. For that purpose, you can use www.apklausa.lt or other available websites. This greatly facilitates the work of data collection and subsequent analysis, but it is necessary to assess whether this research will cover all the required groups of respondents.

3.3.3. The empirical section

The empirical section presents and analyses the obtained research results, and shows their causality. The title of this section is usually associated with (but does not repeat) the title of the thesis. Based on statistical, financial accounting, sociological research, survey or observation materials, various calculations are performed. They are presented in analytical tables, charts, cartograms or other form of presentation. The aim is to determine the regularities, trends and relationships between individual parts of the phenomenon and facts. Practical, empirical data must be processed using statistical methods, the results of observations must be reasonable and reliable. The length should be 20 to 25 pages.

Data (numbers) presented in a table or a figure must not be duplicated in the text, i.e. the same data must be presented either in a table (figure) or in the text (commenting on them, but not repeating them).

The project work part of the recommendations (the length of the section should be two to five pages) contains suggestions on how to solve the analysed problem, suggested ways of improving an activity, an improved model, etc. Proposals can be presented as figures (graphs or diagrams) or tables, and their logic is based on writing. It is recommended to carry out a social and/or economic evaluation of the proposals, i.e. show what their economic or social effect is. When making proposals, the Master's student must justify the possibility of solving the problem, and indicate areas for the implementation of new ideas.

3.4. Conclusions

The conclusions are the presentation of answers to the tasks raised in the introduction to the work. The number usually corresponds to the number of tasks. Conclusions must be related to the work tasks and hypotheses, they must be specific, concise, and correspond to the research results obtained. When formulating them, thoughts are expressed concisely. Only the essential results of theoretical and empirical research should be presented in the conclusions (the length of this part is no more than two pages). In addition, research-based confirmation or rejection of the proposed hypothesis (hypotheses) is presented. It is not possible to provide tables or graphic materials, or cite other authors, in this part. It is recommended to number the conclusions in the same sequence as the tasks set in the introduction to the work.

3.5. Glossary and appendices

After the list of references, it is recommended to provide a glossary of the main concepts in the work. Since authors often describe the same concept in different ways, it is necessary to present a chosen definition in your work so that the author, supervisor, opponent and members of the commission clearly understand the concepts used. After describing a concept, it is necessary to provide a reference to the source.

Appendices are presented after the bibliography, and are not included in the word count of the Master's work. They include tables of primary or secondary material with many numbers occupying more than one page, illustrative material, calculations, methodologies, research programmes, more detailed explanations justifying the conducted research, and visual material that complements the question under consideration and has a certain information value.

All attachments must be named and numbered. They are presented in order, according to the sequence mentioned in the paper, for example: Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc. In the main part of the work, where the data from the corresponding appendix is examined, a reference to the appendix is given in brackets, for example: (see Appendix 1), (see Appendix 2), etc. If the student uses the name of a specific organisation, the appropriate consent of the organisation is required.

4. MAIN REQUIREMENTS, TABLES, FIGURES AND FORMULAS

4.1. The main requirements

All independent written works are written in correct English. Works are printed on standard A4 sheets of white paper (210 x 297 mm), printed on one side of the sheet, with margins, top and bottom 20 mm, right 10 mm, left 30 mm; Optional Times New Roman font; 12 pt letter size; paragraphs start with an indent of no more than 22 mm; and 1.5 spaces between the lines. The text is aligned on both sides of the page.

The pages of the written work, starting with the contents and ending with the appendices, are numbered in the lower right hand corner of the box in Arabic numerals, without dots or dashes.

Chapters start on a new page; sections and subsections on the same page; single-spaced. chapters, sections and subsections are numbered in Arabic numerals separated by a dot (e.g. 2.1.3. Title of subsection).

The names of sections are formed in the centre of the page (14 pt size) in capital letters, and highlighted. Sections begin immediately after the introduction to the section with a one-line space. The titles are 12 pt in size, bold, and formed in the centre of the page. Section names are like sections, only they are not highlighted. No words are raised in the titles, no punctuation marks are written at the end. It is not possible to end a page with a title, with the text starting on another page.

The date is written in three groups of Arabic numerals with hyphens between them. The first group, denoting the year, consists of four digits, the other two consist of two digits. If the month and the day are single-digit numbers, they are preceded by a zero, e.g. 07-09-2020.

There is no need to explain or discuss approved and common abbreviations (eg: USA, UAB, kg, m, Lt, etc) in the text. Rarer or author-created abbreviations must be explained the first time they are used. Other words cannot be abbreviated.

4.2. Tables

Statistical and non-statistical tables can be presented in the written work sections. At the top of the table, the number is indicated in Arabic numerals, and the word 'Table' and its name are written. A period is placed between the word 'Table' and its name. The name of the table begins with an uppercase letter. The number and the name of the table are written in the centre of the page (12 pt size). The numbering of the tables is continuous throughout the work.

Size dimensions are written in the table headers after the graph name, so the main part of the table contains only numbers.

Text and numbers in tables are written horizontally or rotated 90 degrees counter-clockwise if they do not fit in the table. The size of the letters and numbers can be 11 pt.

The information in the table should in all cases be closely related to the material in the text and commented on accordingly. If the data in the table is not interpreted in the text, it is not needed. Tables should complement, not duplicate, the text.

The numbers in the columns of the table are centered. There should be no empty graphs: in the absence of data, a dash is written. Repeated numbers or text are not marked with a repetition sign. Digital material should not be simply transferred from statistical reference books or literary sources, but should be analytically processed and adapted to the written work.

References to tables should be provided in the text, for example '(see Table 1)', and the information presented in the tables must be discussed. The table is presented immediately after the link to it, and placed, if it fits, on the same page; if not, it is moved to another. The width of the table should match the width of the text. It is not overloaded with secondary information that would create 'informational noise'. Tables should be compact and fit on one page. If the writing does not fit on one working page, it should be placed in an appendix.

At the bottom of the table is a reference (10 pt) to the source of the information or the table, preceded by 'Source:'. If the table was compiled by the author based on other sources, citing the sources is written

'Source: compiled by the author, based on ...'. If the table was compiled by the author, it is written 'Compiled by the author'. The numbering of tables and figures is separate.

4.3. Illustrations

All illustrative material, schemes, diagrams, cartograms and photographs, are collectively called pictures. All pictures in the work are arranged horizontally or rotated 90 degrees anti-clockwise. At the bottom of the picture, the number is written in Arabic numerals, the abbreviation 'Fig.' and a name starting with an uppercase letter. The number and name are written in the centre of the page, in 12 pt numbers and letters. The title should convey the content (components) of the image. The numbering of pictures throughout the written work is continuous. Tables and figures are numbered separately.

At the bottom of the picture, under the title, a reference to the literature or the source of the picture is provided (10 pt size), before writing 'Source:'. If the image was compiled by the author on the basis of other sources, the sources are indicated 'Source: compiled by the author, based on ...'.

Figures are placed in the text itself, immediately after the reference to them, or in the appendices. Pictures, their numbers, titles and sources must be submitted on one sheet, and titles centered. Figures must in all cases be closely related logically to the text material and commented on accordingly.

In order to reveal the totality of the phenomenon or the trends in its change, preference should be given to visual material. The submitted material must be properly statistically processed: near absolutes, derived relative numbers that would reveal the dynamics and structure of the phenomenon. Graphic illustrations should be easy to read and understand to reveal the essence of the phenomenon studied. Conventional signs must be a different colour or otherwise, so as not to confuse their meanings.

4.4. Formulas

Mathematical formulas can be provided directly in the text or on a separate line. Only simple, unnumbered formulas without fractional expressions should be presented in the text. More complex formulas, the size of which need to be explained, should be put on a separate line. Formulas that are not used in calculations and are not related to the work should not be presented in the work. Some letter designations and symbols used in the formulas need to be explained.

Formula symbols are explained immediately after the formula, following the principle of consistency. A comma is placed under the formula, the word 'where' and a colon are written on a new line, and all the symbols in the formula are indicated below, with their meanings explained after a dash. Each explanation is followed by a semicolon. To make formulas stand out from the text, a single blank line is left before and after them.

If there is more than one formula, they are numbered in Arabic numerals. The number is written on the same line as the formula, on the right-hand side of the page, between round brackets. When a formula is mentioned in the text, its number is given in parentheses, e.g. 'formula (2)'. The text must include a reference to the source from which it was taken or by whom it was compiled.

You can move the formula to the next line by the equal, addition, subtraction and multiplication signs. Formulas are not raised at the division sign. The signs at which the formula is raised are written twice, at the end of the first line and at the beginning of the next.

When writing formulas, it is convenient to use the program environment Insert Object Microsoft Equation 2.0 or 3.0, select the symbols used in mathematical formulas, and write them out in the desired place of the text with the Insert command.

Indices must be smaller than the characters of the main line and written so that the horizontal centreline of the index coincides with the horizontal border lines of the main line, eg: a^2, xij. Indexes consisting of abbreviated words are written without full stops, for example: P_{vid}. If the index consists of several abbreviated words, they are separated by full stops, except for the last abbreviated word.

Calculations based on formulas are usually performed and written in the following order: the formula is written, the values of the quantities are given instead of letter symbols, and the numerical result and its unit of measurement are given after the equal sign (eg: TC = FC + VC = 60 + 15 = 75 EUR).

5. CITATION, REFERENCES, LITERATURE

5.1. Citation, references to literary sources

All literature sources referenced in the work must be listed in the bibliography. The list of references is given after the conclusions. Literature sources not listed in the references are not written in the bibliography. The bibliography is given on a separate numbered page. The word ‘Literature’ is written in bold at the top of the page. Various sources, documents, figures and statements can be cited or mentioned in the independent written work, but it should be remembered that the material for literature and sources cannot be copied verbatim. It is conveyed in one’s own words, trying to express one’s opinion, or to present statements by other authors on the issue under consideration, to reveal similarities and differences of opinion, to emphasise what the student agrees with, what the student accepts critically, and what thoughts the student disagrees with, and why. The quotations provided are short, expressing a clear idea, justifying the question or provision under consideration. Translating from another language when quoting must convey clearly the idea; the translation should not be literal.

Literature sources can be cited and mentioned in the text in four ways: by presenting a summary of the idea, by paraphrasing the idea, by quoting, or by combining the methods mentioned. A summary is a concise retelling of the original text in your own words. Paraphrasing means conveying the essence of the content in other, not the author’s, words. It is quoted only when the original words, sentences, parts of them, or sometimes even paragraphs, are particularly important or original. A quotation is always put between quotation marks. When quoting, it is necessary to indicate the source on the basis of which the statement, discussion and reasoning are presented. The better documented the text and the digital material, the more serious a picture is formed of the scientific value of the written work and the diligence of the student.

References to literature sources are given between round brackets, indicating the author's last name and the year of publication, for example, '(Juodeika, 2020)'. If the author is mentioned in the text, only the year is indicated in parentheses after the last name, for example: 'According to L. Jovaiša (2013),'. If a source by two or three authors is mentioned, it is necessary to indicate the authors' surnames and initials, followed by the year in round brackets, for example, 'E. Bagdonas and E. Kazlauskienė (2021) claim ...'

When citing multiple sources, the authors' names and years are separated by semicolons, for example, '(Juodeika, 2020; Madera, 2019; Mayer, Duesenberry, Aliber, 2009)'. If there are more than three authors of a literature source, the first, the first two, or the first three authors are listed, followed by 'etc.'. For example, 'other authors (Pranulis, Pajuodis et al., 2020) claim that ...' If there is no source author, the first words of the source name are written, or the full name and year, for example, '(Lietuvos statistikos metraštis, 2020; Dėle Lithuanian kvalifikių..., 2010)'.

In the text, different publications by the same author published in the same year are indicated by letters. The letters a, b, c, etc, are written next to the year of publication, for example, '(Pranevičienė, 2020a; 2020b)'.

5.2. Compilation of the reference list

The reference list is an independent part of the written work. It is written in the style of the seventh version of the American Psychological Association (APA). A preliminary list of references is drawn up at the very beginning of the work. Publications, which are intended to be based on the work, are reselected while writing, linked to the text with links. Finally, descriptions of the publications used are presented in general form. Mendeley or Zotero software is recommended for citation and bibliography.

Basic description rules:

1. The general order of reference and bibliography must be followed throughout the work.
2. The literature is arranged in Lithuanian alphabetical order.
3. The publication authority or publisher of the source must be indicated.

4. Publications in Cyrillic are listed immediately after publications in the Latin alphabet.

The following elements are required in book descriptions: the author, the year of publication, title (in italics), and the publisher. Include permission information in parentheses after the name. If the book has a DOI, include this reference after the publisher's name. Do not include the publisher's location. For example:

Jackson, L.M. (2019). *The psychology of prejudice: From attitudes to social action* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/0000168-000

Rutkauskas, A.V., Tamošiūnienė, R. (2002). *Business design*. Technique.

Examples of book descriptions with an editor:

Kesharwani, P. (ed.). (2020). *Nanotechnology based approaches for tuberculosis treatment*. Academic Press.

Torino, G.C., Rivera, D.P., Capodilupo, C.M., Nadal, K.L., Sue, D.W. (eds.). (2019). Microaggression theory: Influence and implications. John Wiley & Sons. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119466642

An example of a journal article description:

Grady, J.S., Her, M., Moreno, G., Perez, C., Yelinek, J. (2019). Emotions in storybooks: A comparison of storybooks that represent ethnic and racial groups in the United States. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8 (3), 207–217. https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000185

Example of journal article description with article number:

Jerrentrup, A., Mueller, T., Glowalla, U., Herder, M., Henrichs, N., Neubauer, A., Schaefer, J.R. (2018). Teaching medicine with the help of 'Dr. House'. *PLoS ONE*, 13 (3), Article e0193972. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193972

Examples of a journal article missing information description:

Stegmeir, M. (2016). Climate change: New discipline practices promote college access. *The Journal of College Admission*, (231), 44–47. https://www.nxtbook.com/ygsreprints/NACAC/nacac_jca_spring2016/#/46

Sanchiz, M., Chevalier, A., Amadieu, F. (2017). How do older and young adults start searching for information? Impact of age, domain knowledge and problem complexity on the different steps of information searching. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 72, 67–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.038

Butler, J. (2017). Where access meets multimodality: The case of ASL music videos. Kairos: *A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, 21 (1). http://technorhetoric.net/21.1/topoi/butler/index.html

Examples of links to newspaper articles:

Carey, B. (2019, March 22). Can we get better at forgetting? *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/health/memory-forgetting-psychology.html

Harlan, C. (2013, April 2). North Korea vows to restart a shuttered nuclear reactor that can make bomb-grade plutonium. *The Washington Post*, A1, A4.

Stobbe, M. (2020, January 8). Cancer death rate in the U.S. sees largest one-year drop ever. *Chicago Tribune*.

Example of a link to a conference report published in a journal:

Duckworth, A.L., Quirk, A., Gallop, R., Hoyle, R.H., Kelly, D.R., Matthews, M.D. (2019). Cognitive and non-cognitive predictors of success. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, USA, 116 (47), 23499–23504. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1910510116

Example of a link to a conference paper published as part of a book:

Bedenel, A.L., Jourdan, L., Biernacki, C. (2019). Probability estimation by an adapted genetic algorithm in web insurance. In R. Battiti, M. Brunato, I. Kotsireas, P. Pardalos (eds.). *Learning and Intelligent Optimization*. Vol. 11353. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, p. 225-240. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05348-2_21

Example of a link on a news website:

Roberts, N. (2020, June 10). *Trayvon Martin's mother, Sybrina Fulton, qualifies to run for elected office.* BET News. https://www.bet.com/news/national/2020/06/10/trayvon-martin-mother-sybrina-fulton-qualifies-for-office-florid.html

Toner, K. (2020, September 24). *When Covid-19 hit, he turned his newspaper route into a lifeline for senior citizens.* CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/04/us/coronavirus-newspaper-deliveryman-groceries-senior-citizens-cnnheroes-trnd/index.html

Example of a link from a website created by a group of government agencies:

National Institute of Mental Health. (2018, July). *Anxiety disorders*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml

6. ACADEMIC ETHICS, WORK EVALUATION, PERMISSION TO DEFEND

6.1. Academic writing ethics

When writing their final thesis, Master's students must adhere to the principle of academic integrity: to formulate their scientific ideas independently, to be familiar not only with theories that support their idea but also with opposing theories, not to claim authorship of other works, to provide references, to comply with citation requirements, and not to falsify data (About Klaipėda approval of the description of general requirements for students' independent written works of the university, 2020).

The principle of academic honesty is violated by: presenting someone else's work as one's own; not distinguishing foreign text in the written work; retelling someone else's text; and presenting illustrative material or data without indicating the source. The thesis does not repeat part of the author's coursework or other independent work. Each Master's thesis is checked to determine the level of plagiarism in the written work.

6.2. Evaluation of scientific work

At the end of the first, second and third semesters (during the exam session), the Master's student must account for the research work in a general public defence in the department, by presenting the progress of the preparation of the final work, the research carried out, the research programme, etc. The supervisor informs about the process of working with the student, the periodicity of writing the thesis, and the problems that have arisen. The Master's student presents the prepared scientific work of the semester according to the settlement date during the exam session. The work of the semester is evaluated collegially by researchers in the department, adding the grade to the academic information system of the university.

By decision of the departmental meeting, the author of the final thesis may be asked to provide information about the progress of the preparation of the work, and to present the work or a part of it. The student must be informed about this no later than ten working days before the scheduled settlement date. The student must upload the work to VMA by the specified date during each semester.

6.3. Permission to defend the thesis

The Master's thesis (two bound copies) and an electronic version (with a text editor and in PDF format, which is uploaded to KU's virtual learning platform [moodle environment]) are registered by the Master's student in the department before the start date of the exam session announced by order of the rector. The study coordinator of the department informs Master's students about the form for submission on paper or in digital format one month before the submission date of the paper. The final work must be bound with a hard imitation-leather cover (thermo-bound).

Final theses are defended only after completing the entire study programme and obtaining the relevant permits. Permission is provided in the cover letter of theses (see Appendix 2). The supervisor submits the conclusion on the preparation of the final thesis to the head of the department. The latter organises a meeting of the department, where the issue of permission to defend the thesis is discussed. Having completed the entire study programme in a shorter period of time, students have the right to submit and defend their final theses in January or June, depending on the date of admission.

The dean's order regarding permission to defend the final theses, the sequence of the defence, the students' names and surnames, the topics of the work, the date, and the place of the defence are publicly announced by order of the rector no later than five working days before the date of the start of the work of the qualification commission.

As a rule, theses cannot be allowed to be defended if: 1) plagiarism or other signs of non-independent work are detected; 2) the content of the work does not meet the minimum requirements for this type of work; 3) the student did not regularly consult with the work supervisor and cannot substantiate the statements formulated in the work; 4) the working language is incorrect; 5) the work is incorrectly formalised technically; 6) the work is submitted late.

7. REVIEW AND DEFENCE OF THE WORK

7.1. Work review

The study coordinator of the department hands the work to the reviewers, and informs them of the time and place for the defence of the work. A person with a degree can be a reviewer of a Master's theses. The Master's thesis is reviewed by two reviewers: they indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the work, and evaluate it according to a ten-point system. The reviewers submit their feedback in the review form approved by the Department of Management (see Appendix 6). Reviewers submit reviews to the department's study coordinator no later than three working days before the date of the defence of the thesis. The student has a right to become familiar with the reviews two working days before the date of the defence of the thesis. The requirements for the structure of the review are determined by the faculty's council. Research papers and reviews can be sent by e-mail or uploaded to the KU virtual learning environment (moodle environment).

7.2. Qualification committee

The qualification committee for the second-degree study programme consists of five competent specialists in the field of study: researchers and professional practitioners. One member of the committee can be a person who has not worked at the university for the last three years, a social partner, or a person with highly qualified management experience.

The composition of the qualification committee and the date for the defence of the final thesis are approved by order of the rector (at the recommendation of the dean of the faculty) no later than one month before the expected date of the defence of the thesis.

7.3. Report on the thesis

Preparing a report is no less important than preparing a Master's thesis. Often, the results of a student's hard work remain undisclosed and unappreciated simply because they are not properly prepared for presentation, i.e. an inappropriate structure of the report, undisclosed relevance of the research and the essence of its results, improperly prepared and demonstrated visual aids, slurred speech, exceeding the report time limit, and others.

Up to 12 minutes are allocated for the presentation of the Master's final thesis, including the demonstration of visual material. Another ten to 15 minutes are allocated for answers to questions or speeches.

After exiting to read the message, there is no need to repeat the job title. The form of the report is not specifically defined, but it is nevertheless necessary (Baršauskienė, Macerinskienė, 2006):

- to reveal the relevance of the research, the scientific problem;
- to describe the purpose, object and tasks of the research;
- to specify the research methods or methods of information collection;
- to discuss the research results and recommendations.

The relevance of the research. This part of the presentation takes one or two minutes. The research problem is described briefly, the relevance of the research is emphasised, and the choice of the topic is explained.

The purpose, object, subject and tasks of the research. This part of the report is presented as presented in the paper.

Research methods, methods of information collection. This part should take no more than three minutes. It is not necessary to explain the entire methodological part of the work here, only to discuss the applied research methods briefly and informatively, the scope of the research, and the statistical, legal, sociological and experimental information that is based on it.

Research results, and their areas of application. This is an essential part. The results of the study are consistently presented, on the basis of visual and informative material, tables, diagrams, graphs, schemes, etc, in all sections of the work. It is impossible to present all the data, so the most important data that reveal the research and its value in response to the scientific problem formulated in the introduction should be selected. Thus, it would be worthwhile stating the results on the basis of which the conclusions were formulated. It is not necessary to read the conclusions that are presented at the end of the work separately. The report should be concluded by revealing possible future research directions for the problem.

In order to avoid surprises when defending the work, it is advisable to prepare the report in advance. The message should not be read in its entirety. It would be better to speak freely based on the slides. However, even with a phenomenal memory, clear statements are a life-saver in a tense situation.

Presentation of visual and information material. Visual and other information material is necessary to supplement or illustrate the text. The number of slides in the presentation depends on the topic, but there can be up to ten (colour or black and white). The slides must be commented on concisely.

You can also use other informative material: leaflets, samples of the product under study, etc. It is important that these complement or illustrate the text.

7.4. Evaluation of the defence of the thesis

The Master's thesis is defended at a public meeting of the qualification committee. It is recommended that the qualification committee consider no more than 12 works in one working day.

The procedure for the defence of the Thesis:

1. The chairman of the qualification committee presents the composition of the committee, announces its powers, and describes the defence procedure.
2. During the defence, the student gives a report (up to 12 minutes) about the work, indicating the research problem, the pur-

pose of the work, the tasks, the hypothesis (if any), the research object, the research results, and the reliability of the applied methods, presents and substantiates the conclusions, and makes suggestions.

3. After the student's report, the reviewers speak. They express their opinion whether the work meets the requirements of a Master's in Management degree. If the reviewers do not participate in the defence session, the reviews are read by the secretary of the qualification committee.
4. The student answers the questions and comments of the reviewers and committee members.
5. The supervisor of the work can speak. In his absence, his written response is read by the secretary of the qualification committee.
6. Discussions are undertaken.
7. The qualification committee evaluates the work. The work is evaluated in a closed meeting of the qualification committee by majority vote after all the defence of work for that day have ended. In the case of a draw, the chairman of the qualification committee has the decisive vote. The committee takes into account the reviewers' evaluations and the supervisor's feedback. Master's students who have published at least one scientific article are awarded one additional point.
8. On the day of the defence, the chairman of the qualification committee publicly announces the evaluation of the work and summarises the results of the defence. At the request of the student, the evaluation of the work can be published personally. All evaluations are included in the academic information system of Klaipėda University.

Evaluation criteria for a Master's thesis: the relevance of the examined problem; the degree of the resolution of the work goals and tasks; the reliability of the scientific research methods applied and the results obtained; the validity and independence of the conclusions and proposals, and their theoretical and practical significance; the scientific value of the research conducted, the results and the prepared work obtained; the presentation of the work, the validity and correctness of the answers to questions, the ability to theoretically and practically substantiate statements and discuss; the working language and style; the level of the technical formalisation of the work text, tables and figures; the level of the formalisation of measures used for labour protection.

A ten-point criteria rating scale is used. All the members of the qualification committee participating in the public defence session evaluate the student's thesis and defence with two marks on a ten-point scale. The weighted factor of the defence grade is up to 0.2. The final grade is calculated as the arithmetical average of the marks submitted by the members of the qualification committee who participated in the meeting, rounded off to a whole number.

The Master's thesis and its defence are evaluated according to an (Approval of the description of general requirements for students' independent written works of Klaipėda University, 2020) evaluation system: 10 (excellent), excellent, exceptional knowledge and abilities; 9 (very good), solid knowledge and abilities; 8 (good), better than average knowledge and ability; 7 (average), average knowledge and ability, there are minor errors; 6 (satisfactory), knowledge and abilities (skills) are below average, there are mistakes; 5 (weak), knowledge and ability (skills) meet minimum requirements; 4, 3, 2, 1 (unsatisfactory), minimum requirements have not been met.

Digital media of Master's theses rated 'very good' and 'excellent' are transferred to the university library in accordance with the established procedure, according to the 28 September 2015 order of the rector of Klaipėda University No 1-010 'Regarding the approval of the description of the procedure for uploading Klaipėda University's electronic documents to the information system of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library'.[1] All theses are stored according to the procedure established by the university.

If the work is evaluated as unsatisfactory, the qualification committee decides whether the student can defend the same work after sup-

1 https://www.ku.lt/kub/etd/

plementing and correcting it, or must prepare a new work, the topic of which is approved in accordance with the established procedure. The qualification commission formalises its decision in a protocol. A student who has not defended their final thesis is allowed to defend the thesis no earlier than five months later.

The defence of a thesis can be postponed for justified reasons: illness, or business trips. A delayed defence is decided on a case-by-case basis.

7.5. Appeal procedure

An appeal regarding the assessment of the content of a thesis is not accepted. The decision of the qualification committee is final. Appeals are accepted in the following cases: when the student believes that he was illegally prevented from defending his thesis; when the student believes that a possible violation of the thesis defence procedure (the defence took place outside the time specified by the rector's order, or the student did not have the opportunity to present the thesis or answer questions) negatively affected the evaluation of the final thesis; or the members of the qualification committee violated the norms of academic ethics during the defence.

The student has the right within two working days, after receiving an unsatisfactory assessment of the Master's work, to contact the dean or vice-dean of the faculty (if the dean is the chairman of the qualification committee). In order to consider the appeal, in the first case, the dean uses the head of the department, the scientific supervisor and one additional expert; in the second case, the qualification chairman and the secretary of the committee. In both cases, the arguments of the student who filed the appeal are heard. The committee considering the appeal makes a decision and submits a written argument no later than three working days after receiving the appeal. A student who is not satisfied with the decision of the appeals committee has the right to apply to the University Administration and Student Disputes Review Commission in accordance with the procedure established by the Senate.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Title page

KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

TOPIC (TITLE)

Master's Thesis in Business Management

Author	group code, student Name Surname
Supervisor	position, pedagogical name, Name Surname

Klaipėda, 20XX

Appendix 2. Cover letter

FORM OF THE COVER LETTER FOR A MASTER'S FINAL THESIS

To be filled in by the author of the Master's final thesis

....

(name and surname of the author of the Master's final thesis)

....

(title in English of the Master's final thesis)

This is to certify that the Master's final thesis has been written independently, without violating the copyright of other individuals, and that the Master's final thesis or part of it contains no material previously submitted for a degree at Klaipėda University or any other institution of higher education.

....

(signature of the author of the Master's final thesis)

I agree that the Master's final thesis can be used free of charge in the study process at Klaipėda University for a five-year period.

....

(signature of the author of the Master's final thesis)

To be filled in by the supervisor of the Master's student

The Master's final thesis ....

(may/may not be defended)

....

(date) (name, surname and signature of the supervisor of the Master's student)

To be filled in by the study administrator of the department

The final thesis was registered in the Department

....

(date)

(name, surname and signature of the administrator)

To be filled in by the head of the Department in charge of the study programme

The Master's final thesis ....

(may/may not be defended)

....

(date) (name, surname and signature of the head of the department)

I appoint as reviewers ....

....

(name and surname of the reviewers)

....

(date) (name, surname and signature of the head of the department)

Appendix 3. The task for the final work

KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

TASK FOR THE FINAL WORK

Supervisor:____

_______ group student ________________________________ approved business management thesis topic:

____

The aim of the final work is:____

Thesis tasks:

1) ____;
2) ____;
3) ____.

The prepared final work is registered in the department no later than: in full-time studies, in the last week of the lecture semester; in part-time studies, on 1 June; in studies ending in February, no later than 20 December.

Consulting time of supervisor: ____

Student ___________________________

(signature, date)

Supervisor _______________________

(signature, date)

Appendix 4. Example of a summary

Pavardė A. Vartotojų lojalumo įtaka įmonės verslo konkurencingumui. Verslo vadybos magistro studijų programos baigiamasis darbas. Darbo vadovas prof.dr.P.Vardenis, Klaipėdos universitetas: Klaipėda, 2023– 61 p., 7 priedai.

Lean vadybos sistema yra plačiai taikoma visame pasaulyje, daugiausia gamybos sektoriuje, tačiau vis dar mažai ištirta paslaugų sektoriuje. Ši vadybos koncepcija remiasi filosofija – naudoti visko mažiau siekiant gauti maksimalų rezultatą. Tai tampa ypač aktualu šiandieniniame moderniame pasaulyje sparčiai kintant rinkos sąlygoms. Magistro baigiamojo darbo probleminis klausimas yra – koks yra Lean diegimo modelis paslaugas teikiančioje organisacijoje? Magistro baigiamojo darbo tikslas – išanalizavus teorinius Lean sistemos taikymo metodus ir atlikus empirinį tyrimą, įvertinti praktinį Lean sistemos diegimo modelį pritaikytą paslaugas teikiančioje organisacijoje – pasiektas. Darbas susideda iš trijų pagrindinių dalių. Pirmoje dalyje analizuojami Lean sistemos aspektai ir pritaikymas paslaugas teikiančiose organisacijose, pateiktas sukurtas teorinis Lean diegimo modelis. Antroje dalyje pateikiama tyrimo metodika. Trečioje dalyje pristatomi atliktos anketinės apklausos ir pusiau struktūruoto interviu tyrimo rezultatai bei pasiūlymai kaip patobulinti Lean diegimą organisacijoje. Darbe pateikiamas sudarytas AB ‘Klaipėdos nafta‘ praktinis Lean diegimo modelis. Darbe iškelta hipotezė: praktiškai diegdama Lean sistemą, paslaugas teikianti organisacija, diegimą vykdo teoriniame modelyje numatytais etapais – atmesta. Atsižvelgiant į tyrimo rezultatus, pateiktos rekomendacijos dėl Lean diegimo modelio tobulinimo organisacijoje.

Raktažodžiai: Lean, Lean diegimas, organisacija, paslaugas teikianti organisacija

Pavardenis V. Klaipėda Port Development: A Feasibility Study. Thesis for the degree of Master in Business Management. Academic supervisor: V. Pavardenis, Klaipėda University: Klaipėda, 2023. – 53 pp.

The Lean management system has been applied widely in the world, especially in the manufacturing business sector; however, few studies have been made in the services business area. This concept of management is based on the following philosophy: maximum results are produced by consuming less. It is becoming increasingly significant in our modern world under rapidly changing market economy conditions. The problem question in the Master's thesis is the following: What is the Lean implementation model in a service business? The objective of the Master's thesis has been achieved: a practical Lean system model applied to a service business has been assessed after analysing the theoretical methods of the application of the Lean system and conducting an empirical study. The thesis consists of three parts. The first part analyses aspects of the Lean system, and its application in service business organisations; in addition, a theoretical Lean implementation model has been presented. The second part deals with research methodology. The third part presents the results of a survey and a semi-structured interview conducted, as well as suggestions on how to improve the implementation of the Lean system in an organisation. The thesis presents a practical implementation model that was conducted at AB Klaipėdos nafta. The following hypothesis, which was formulated in the thesis, was rejected: during the practical application of the Lean system, a service business organisation conducts the implementation according to the stages set in the theoretical model. Recommendations concerning the improvement of the implementation model of Lean in an organisation were presented according to the study findings.

Keywords: Lean, Lean implementation, organisation, service business organisation.

Appendix 5. Example of contents

CONTENTS

Appendix 6. Example of a review

KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

MASTER'S THESIS REVIEW

Name, surname:
Topic:
Name and surname of reviewer:

1. Relevance and novelty:
2. Structure matching title:
3. Fomulation of the problem, aim, task:
4. Analysis:
5. Strengths (knowledge, skills):
6. Weaknesses (knowledge, skills):
7. Conclusions:
8. References:
9. Annexes:
10. Other notes:

Questions for the author:
1.
2.
3.

Evaluation of the Master's thesis ________________________________

____

Name and surname of reviewer Signature Date

Klaipėda University Press

Ligita Šimanskienė, Rimantas Stašys
MASTER'S THESIS IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES
Methodological book

Klaipėda, 2023

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