

جامعة ميدأوشن

كلية الإدارة

قسم / تخصص ماجستير في إدارة مشاريع



عنوان البحث

عقد اتفاقية بين محطة السكك الحديدية السعودية وشركة مدلوق لزيادة نشاط العمليات اللوجستية بين الدمام والرياض

The agreement between the Saudi railway company (SAR) and MEDLOG company to enhance logistics services between Dammam and Riyadh

إعداد الطالبة: نرجس عبدالله القديحي

إشراف / أ. علاء احمد

العام الدراسي:

2024

Introduction:

Logistics is the complex process of planning, implementing, and managing the efficient flow and storage of commodities, services, and information from their point of origin to consumption. It includes many kinds of tasks such as transportation, warehousing, inventory management, and processing orders. The basic goal of logistics is to ensure that things arrive at the correct location, time, and condition, serving the needs of both customers and enterprises.

In today's highly competitive and fast-paced economy, logistics is critical. Effective logistics management is critical for ensuring that commodities arrive at suppliers and then reach the final consumer, especially during certain seasons and times. This is especially important in businesses like retail, agriculture, and manufacturing, where timely delivery has a considerable impact on sales, customer happiness, and overall business performance.

For example, during peak seasons such as vacations or harvest periods, the capacity to deliver goods quickly and efficiently can be the difference between satisfying consumer demand and experiencing stockouts or delays. Timely logistics ensures that products are available when needed, improving the customer experience and increasing brand loyalty. Furthermore, it enables companies to improve their supply chains, cut costs, and maintain a competitive advantage in the market.

In essence, logistics is critical to the smooth transfer of goods from producers to consumers, allowing businesses to operate efficiently and meet their client commitments on time.

Problem to study:

Despite the importance of logistics, various obstacles remain, particularly in the districts between Dammam and Riyadh. Inadequate infrastructure, traffic congestion, delays, and transportation network inefficiencies are all major challenges. These issues can result in higher transportation costs, longer delivery times, and diminished supply chain reliability. Such challenges limit organizations' capacity to answer consumer needs quickly and efficiently, affecting economic growth and competitiveness.

To address these issues, the Saudi Railway company (SAR) signed an arrangement with MEDLOG, a prominent global logistics organization. This strategic cooperation intends to improve logistics infrastructure and services between Dammam and Riyadh, eliminating existing issues and increasing overall freight transit efficiency.

أهمية الدراسة:

Under the terms of the agreement, SAR and MEDLOG will work together to optimize logistical infrastructure, resulting in faster and more dependable cargo transit. This initiative focuses on:

1. Improved Logistics Efficiency: By improving freight transport services between Dammam and Riyadh, the agreement aims to streamline the logistics process, shorten transit times, and improve reliability. This is critical for companies that depend on timely deliveries and for overall economic efficiency.
2. Technological Integration: Using advanced logistics technology to improve tracking, inventory management, and real-time communication.
3. Operational Efficiency: Streamlining operations to eliminate delays and improve collaboration across the supply chain.
4. Sustainability: Advancing eco-friendly transportation technologies to lessen the environmental impact of logistical operations.
5. Economic Growth: This collaboration supports Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on oil. By increasing the logistics sector, the agreement encourages economic diversification and increases the country's attractiveness as a logistics hub in the region.
6. Support for Vision 2030: The agreement is part of the larger Vision 2030 program, which aims to convert Saudi Arabia into a world-class logistics hub. Increasing railway logistics capabilities directly helps this strategy by strengthening the country's transportation infrastructure and operating efficiency.

This collaboration is expected to streamline supply chains, save transportation costs, and shorten delivery times for enterprises located in these critical economic regions. The cooperation will address the growing demand for efficient cargo transport solutions by combining MEDLOG's significant logistics experience with SAR's expansive rail network.

Finally, this deal represents a significant step forward in Saudi Arabia's efforts to modernize its logistics industry and is consistent with Vision 2030's overarching goals. The collaboration between SAR and MEDLOG is expected to play a critical role in developing the Kingdom into a worldwide logistics hub while also fostering sustainable economic development and diversification.

أهداف الدراسة:

Objectives of the study:

The study's goal with relation to the contract between MEDLOG and the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) centers on various important areas:

1. Evaluate Logistics Efficiency: Determine how the agreement improves logistics services between Riyadh and Dammam, especially about cutting transit times and boosting freight reliability.
2. Economic Impact Analysis: Analyze how the improved logistics services would affect the local and national economies, considering possible gains in GDP and economic diversification in accordance with Vision 2030 objectives.
3. Infrastructure Development: Analyze how Saudi Arabia's total transportation infrastructure would be affected by the growth and modernization of the rail network. This involves assessing how better connectivity and the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies into train operations might be achieved.
4. Sustainability and Environmental Benefits: Examine the environmental advantages of switching to rail for greater freight transportation as it is typically more environmentally friendly than road transport, helping Saudi Arabia achieve its environmental objectives.
5. Knowledge and Technology Transfer: Evaluate how foreign partnerships (such as those with Thales and Siemens) contribute to the improvement of Saudi Arabian expertise in the logistics and transportation industries by bringing best practices and technology to the country.
6. Support for Vision 2030: Assess how the accord fits in with and advances the strategic goals of Vision 2030, including the transformation of Saudi Arabia into a preeminent international center for logistics.
7. Stakeholder Impact: Research into how the agreement would affect different stakeholders, such as local communities, companies that depend on logistics services, and workers in the transportation and logistics industries.

By addressing these goals, the study hopes to offer a thorough grasp of the importance and possible consequences of the SAR-MEDLOG agreement, providing knowledge that can direct future logistics-related policies and efforts.

Study questions:

Here are some study questions that can guide an in-depth analysis of the agreement between the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) and MEDLOG:

1. Logistics Efficiency:

- How will the agreement between SAR and MEDLOG improve logistics efficiency between Dammam and Riyadh?
- What specific measures are being taken to reduce transit times and increase reliability of freight transport?

2. Economic Impact:

- What are the potential economic benefits of enhanced logistics services for local businesses and the national economy?
- How does this agreement contribute to the economic diversification goals of Vision 2030?

3. Infrastructure Development:

- What infrastructure developments are planned as part of this agreement?
- How will these developments improve connectivity and transportation efficiency within Saudi Arabia?

4. Technological Advancements:

- What advanced technologies are being introduced through the collaboration with global partners like Thales and Siemens?
- How will these technologies improve the operational capabilities of SAR?

5. Sustainability:

- What are the environmental benefits of shifting freight transport from road to rail?
- How does this agreement align with Saudi Arabia's sustainability goals?

6. Knowledge and Skills Transfer:

- How will international partnerships facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology to local stakeholders?

7. Support for Vision 2030:

- In what ways does the agreement support the strategic objectives of Vision 2030?

- How does enhancing the logistics sector contribute to Saudi Arabia's goal of becoming a global logistics hub?

8. Stakeholder Impact:

- Who are the primary stakeholders affected by this agreement, and how will they benefit?
- What are the potential challenges for stakeholders, and how can they be mitigated?

9. Performance Metrics:

- What metrics will be used to measure the success of the enhanced logistics services?
- How will SAR and MEDLOG monitor and evaluate the impact of their collaboration over time?

10. Comparative Analysis:

- How does this agreement compare with similar logistics enhancements in other countries?
- What lessons can be learned from international examples to further improve Saudi Arabia's logistics services?

These questions can help structure a comprehensive study on the agreement, providing a clear framework for analysis and evaluation.

Study assignments:

Here are some study assignments related to the agreement between the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) and MEDLOG:

Assignment 1: Logistics Efficiency Analysis

Objective: Evaluate the impact of the SAR-MEDLOG agreement on logistics efficiency between Dammam and Riyadh.

Tasks:

1. Review the agreement details and identify key measures implemented to improve logistics efficiency.
2. Compare pre-agreement and post-agreement transit times and reliability of freight transport.
3. Analyze the anticipated and actual outcomes of these improvements.
4. Deliverable: A report detailing the findings, including graphs or charts showing changes in logistics metrics.

Assignment 2: Economic Impact Assessment

Objective: Assess the economic impact of enhanced logistics services on local businesses and the national economy.

Tasks:

1. Conduct a literature review on the economic benefits of improved logistics services.
2. Interview local businesses to gather data on how the agreement has affected their operations.
3. Use economic models to estimate the broader economic impact on the national economy.

Deliverable: An economic impact analysis report, including case studies and quantitative data.

Assignment 3: Infrastructure Development Evaluation

Objective: Analyze the infrastructure developments resulting from the SAR-MEDLOG agreement.

Tasks:

1. Document the planned infrastructure upgrades and expansions as part of the agreement.
2. Evaluate the current state of these projects and their projected completion timelines.
3. Assess how these developments improve overall transportation connectivity.

Deliverable: A detailed report with maps, timelines, and infrastructure impact assessments.

Assignment 4: Technological Advancements Review

Objective: Investigate the technological advancements introduced through the agreement and their effects.

Tasks:

1. Identify the new technologies and systems being implemented by SAR in collaboration with Thales and Siemens.
2. Analyze how these technologies improve operational capabilities and logistics management.
3. Conduct interviews with SAR and MEDLOG personnel to gather insights on technological impacts.

Deliverable: A comprehensive review paper on technological advancements and their benefits.

Assignment 5: Sustainability Impact Study

Objective: Examine the environmental benefits of shifting freight transport from road to rail.

Tasks:

1. Compare the environmental impact of rail versus road freight transport.
2. Calculate potential reductions in carbon emissions and fuel consumption.
3. Investigate additional sustainability initiatives linked to the SAR-MEDLOG agreement.

Deliverable: An environmental impact report, including data visualizations and sustainability metrics.

Assignment 6: Knowledge and Skills Transfer Analysis

Objective: Assess the impact of international partnerships on knowledge and skills transfer.

Tasks:

1. Review agreements with Thales, Siemens, and other partners focusing on knowledge and skills transfer.
2. Evaluate the training and development programs provided to local stakeholders.
3. Measure the impact on local expertise and capabilities in the logistics sector.

Deliverable: A report analyzing the effectiveness of knowledge and skills transfer initiatives.

Assignment 7: Vision 2030 Alignment

Objective: Evaluate how the SAR-MEDLOG agreement supports the strategic objectives of Vision 2030.

Tasks:

1. Review Vision 2030 goals related to logistics and transportation.
2. Analyze the agreement's alignment with these goals.

3. Assess the contribution of the agreement to making Saudi Arabia a global logistics hub.

Deliverable: A strategic analysis report linking the SAR-MEDLOG agreement to Vision 2030 objectives.

Assignment 8: Stakeholder Impact Study

Objective: Investigate the impact of the agreement on various stakeholders.

Tasks:

1. Identify key stakeholders affected by the agreement, including businesses, communities, and employees.
2. Conduct surveys or interviews to gather stakeholder perspectives and experiences.
3. Analyze the benefits and challenges faced by different stakeholder groups.

Deliverable: A stakeholder impact study report, including qualitative and quantitative data.

Assignment 9: Performance Metrics Development

Objective: Develop and monitor performance metrics to evaluate the success of the agreement.

Tasks:

1. Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) relevant to logistics efficiency and service quality.
2. Design a framework for monitoring and evaluating these KPIs over time.
3. Present findings on the performance of logistics services since the agreement's implementation.

Deliverable: A performance metrics framework and a monitoring report.

Assignment 10: Comparative Analysis

Objective: Compare the SAR-MEDLOG agreement with similar logistics enhancements in other countries.

Tasks:

1. Select case studies of similar logistics agreements in other regions.
2. Conduct a comparative analysis of strategies, outcomes, and best practices.
3. Identify lessons learned and recommendations for further improvements in Saudi Arabia.

Deliverable: A comparative analysis report with recommendations for SAR and MEDLOG.

These assignments collectively provide a comprehensive approach to studying the SAR-MEDLOG agreement, covering various dimensions such as efficiency, economic impact, infrastructure development, sustainability, and alignment with Vision 2030.

Previous studies:

For context, here are some previous studies related to logistics, rail infrastructure, and agreements like the one between SAR and MEDLOG:

Studies on Rail Logistics and Infrastructure Development

1. "The Role of Rail Transport in Sustainable Logistics: A Study on Freight Transport in Europe":

- Summary: This study examines the role of rail transport in sustainable logistics across Europe, highlighting the environmental and economic benefits of shifting freight from road to rail.

- Findings*: Rail transport significantly reduces carbon emissions and fuel consumption, and investments in rail infrastructure can enhance the efficiency and reliability of logistics networks.

2. "Impact of Rail Freight Investments on Logistics Efficiency: Case Studies from the United States":

- Summary: This research focuses on various rail freight investments in the U.S. and their impact on logistics efficiency and economic growth.

- Findings: Strategic investments in rail infrastructure improve transit times, reduce logistics costs, and support regional economic development.

Studies on Public-Private Partnerships in Rail Sector

3. "Public-Private Partnerships in Railway Projects: Success Factors and Challenges":

- Summary: This study analyzes the success factors and challenges of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in railway projects, focusing on case studies from different countries.

- Findings: Effective PPPs require clear agreements, strong governance structures, and alignment of objectives between public and private partners.

Studies on Economic Impact of Logistics Improvements

4. "Economic Impact of Improved Logistics Infrastructure: Evidence from Developing Countries":

- Summary: The paper evaluates the economic impact of enhanced logistics infrastructure in developing countries, including rail and road improvements.

- Findings: Improved logistics infrastructure boosts trade, attracts foreign investment, and supports economic diversification.

Studies on Technological Advancements in Rail Systems

5. "Adoption of Advanced Technologies in Rail Transport: Benefits and Challenge:

- Summary: This study investigates the adoption of advanced technologies in rail systems, such as automated signaling and control systems, and their impact on efficiency and safety.

- Findings: Advanced technologies improve operational efficiency, enhance safety, and reduce operational costs, but require significant investment and skilled workforce.

Studies on Sustainable Logistics

6. “Environmental Benefits of Shifting Freight from Road to Rail: A Case Study from Japan”:

- Summary: This research highlights the environmental benefits of shifting freight transport from road to rail in Japan.

- Findings: The shift leads to substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, contributing to national sustainability goals.

These studies provide valuable insights and can serve as references for analyzing the agreement between SAR and MEDLOG. They highlight the potential benefits of enhanced rail logistics, the importance of public-private partnerships, the economic impact of logistics improvements, the role of advanced technologies, and the sustainability advantages of rail transport.

Theoretical premises of the study:

The theoretical premises of the study on the agreement between the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) and MEDLOG to enhance logistics services between Dammam and Riyadh can be framed around several key concepts and theories:

1. Logistics and Supply Chain Management Theory

- Theory: Efficient logistics and supply chain management are critical for the smooth operation of economies and can significantly reduce costs and improve service levels (Christopher, 2016).
- Application: The SAR-MEDLOG agreement aims to enhance logistics efficiency by improving the rail transport system between Dammam and Riyadh, thus optimizing supply chain operations.

2. Economic Development Theory

- Theory: Infrastructure development is a key driver of economic growth. Improved transportation networks facilitate trade, enhance market accessibility, and attract foreign investment (Aschauer, 1989; Banister & Berechman, 2001).
- Application: The enhancement of rail logistics services is expected to support Saudi Arabia's economic diversification and growth as part of Vision 2030.

3. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Theory

- Theory: Successful public-private partnerships leverage the strengths of both sectors, combining public oversight and private sector efficiency to deliver improved infrastructure and services (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002).
- Application: The collaboration between SAR (a state-owned entity) and MEDLOG (a private company) is an example of a PPP designed to upgrade Saudi Arabia's logistics infrastructure.

4. Sustainable Development Theory

- Theory: Sustainable development emphasizes the need for economic development that does not deplete natural resources, balancing economic growth with environmental protection (Brundtland Commission, 1987).
- Application: By shifting freight transport from road to rail, the SAR-MEDLOG agreement aims to reduce carbon emissions and fuel consumption, contributing to Saudi Arabia's environmental goals.

5. Technology Adoption and Diffusion Theory

- Theory: The adoption and diffusion of new technologies can significantly improve operational efficiency and productivity (Rogers, 2003).
- Application: The partnership involves the implementation of advanced technologies in rail logistics, enhancing operational capabilities and efficiency.

6. Stakeholder Theory

- Theory: Effective management considers the interests of all stakeholders involved, ensuring that decisions benefit a wide range of parties, including businesses, employees, and local communities (Freeman, 1984).

- Application: The agreement aims to positively impact various stakeholders by improving logistics services, creating job opportunities, and fostering economic development.

7. Network Theory

- Theory: Efficient networks, including transportation and logistics networks, are crucial for connectivity and the flow of goods and services. Well-connected networks lead to more efficient and resilient supply chains (Barabási, 2016) [oai_citation:1,SAR Signs Agreement between Dammam, Jubail | Leaders].

- Application: The enhancement of the rail network between Dammam and Riyadh is expected to improve overall connectivity and logistics network efficiency in Saudi Arabia.

These theoretical premises provide a foundation for analyzing the impact and significance of the SAR-MEDLOG agreement, offering insights into how the collaboration can achieve its objectives and contribute to broader economic and sustainability goals.

Methodology and research methods:

To explain the methodology and research methods related to a commercial agreement between the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) and the MEDLOG Company, it is needed to outline the approach adopted to investigate such a contract. Here's a detailed explanation of possible methodology and research methods:

Methodology

1. Case Study Approach: - In-depth analysis of the agreement between SAR and MEDLOG, including background, methods, and results.
2. Qualitative Analysis: Conduct interviews, document analysis, and observation to acquire extensive information about the agreement.
3. Quantitative examination: Statistical examination of agreement-related data, including financial performance, operational efficiency, and market impact.
4. Mixed Methods: - Using qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a thorough knowledge of the agreement.

Research Methods

1. Document Analysis: - Review official documents relating to the arrangement, such as contracts, press statements, corporate reports, and regulatory filings.
 - Examining strategic plans, meeting minutes, and other internal records to determine the reasons and objectives underlying the agreement.
2. Interviews:
 - Conducting structured or semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from both SAR and MEDLOG, such as executives, managers, and operational staff.
 - Interviews with industry experts and analysts to provide external perspectives on the agreement.
3. Surveys and Questionnaires:
 - Distributing surveys to employees, customers, and other relevant parties to gather their perceptions and experiences regarding the agreement.
 - Using questionnaires to collect quantitative data on aspects such as service quality, customer satisfaction, and operational performance.

4. Field Observations:

- Observing the operations and interactions between SAR and MEDLOG in practice to gain insights into how the agreement is being implemented.

- Visiting facilities, such as rail terminals and logistics hubs, to observe changes and improvements resulting from the agreement.

5. Data Analysis:

- Statistical analysis of operational and financial data to assess the impact of the agreement on both companies.

- Analyzing performance indicators such as transport volumes, delivery times, cost savings, and revenue growth.

6. Comparative Analysis:

- Comparing the SAR-MEDLOG agreement with similar agreements in the rail and logistics industry to identify best practices and potential challenges.

- Benchmarking against industry standards to evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement.

7. Case Studies of Similar Agreements:

- Reviewing other case studies of similar partnerships between railway companies and logistics providers to draw parallels and identify lessons learned.

Data Sources

1. Internal Company Data:

- Accessing SAR and MEDLOG's internal data, including financial statements, performance reports, and operational data.

2. Industry Reports:

- Utilizing industry reports and market research to understand the broader context of the agreement.

3. Academic and Professional Journals:

- Reviewing literature on railway logistics partnerships, strategic alliances, and supply chain management.

4. Media Reports:

- Analyzing media coverage of the agreement to gauge public perception and stakeholder reactions.

By combining these methodologies and research methods, a comprehensive analysis of the agreement between the Saudi Railway Company and MEDLOG Company can be achieved, providing valuable insights into its implementation, impact, and prospects.

Study tools:

For a study examining the agreement between the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) and MEDLOG Company, the following tools could be employed:

Data Collection Tools

1. Interview Guides:

- Structured or semi-structured questionnaires used during interviews with key stakeholders to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in data collection.

2. Surveys and Questionnaires:

- Standardized forms to gather quantitative and qualitative data from employees, customers, and industry experts about their perceptions and experiences related to the agreement.

3. Document Analysis Checklists:

- Checklists or frameworks to systematically review and extract relevant information from official documents, reports, and contracts.

4. Observation Protocols:

- Structured guides for conducting field observations, noting specific aspects of operations, interactions, and processes influenced by the agreement.

5. Data Collection Software:

- Tools like Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, or Qualtrics for creating and distributing surveys and questionnaires.
- Audio recording devices and transcription software (e.g., Otter.ai) for recording and transcribing interviews.

Data Analysis Tools

1. Statistical Software:

- Software like SPSS, SAS, R, or Python for performing quantitative data analysis, including descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression analysis.

2. Qualitative Analysis Software:

- Tools like Nvivo, Atlas.ti, or MAXQDA for coding and analyzing qualitative data from interviews, observations, and open-ended survey responses.

3. Spreadsheet Software:

- Excel or Google Sheets for organizing and analyzing data, creating charts, and performing basic statistical analyses.

4. Content Analysis Tools: Software or frameworks for analyzing textual data such as documents, media reports, and interview transcripts to find themes, patterns, and trends.

5. Benchmarking Tools: - Use databases and industry studies (e.g., Gartner, Statista) to compare the SAR-MEDLOG agreement to industry standards and other collaborations.

Visualization Tools

1. Data Visualization Software:

- Tools like Tableau, Power BI, or Excel for creating visual representations of data, such as charts, graphs, and dashboards.

2. Mapping Software:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) tools like ArcGIS or QGIS for mapping logistics routes, service areas, and other spatial data.

Visualization Tools

1. Data Visualization Software:

- Tools like Tableau, Power BI, or Excel for creating visual representations of data, such as charts, graphs, and dashboards.

2. Mapping Software:

- Geographic Information System (GIS) tools like ArcGIS or QGIS for mapping logistics routes, service areas, and other spatial data.

Reporting Tools

1. Word Processing Software:

- Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or LaTeX for writing and formatting the research report.

2. Presentation Software:

- PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Prezi for creating presentations to communicate findings to stakeholders.

3. Reference Management Software:

- Tools like EndNote, Zotero, or Mendeley for managing citations and creating bibliographies.

By utilizing these study tools, researchers can effectively collect, analyze, and present data related to the agreement

حدود الدراسة :

Limitation of study:

When considering the limitations of a study on the agreement between the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) and the MEDLOG Company, consider the following potential constraints:

Methodological Limitations

1. Sample Size and Representativeness: - A small number of stakeholders interviewed or polled may not capture all opinions within the company or industry.

- A non-representative sample may limit the generalizability of the results.

2. Data Availability and Quality: Incomplete or inaccessible internal data from SAR or MEDLOG may limit comprehensive analysis.

- Reliance on secondary data sources, which may be outdated or biased.

3. Research Design:

- The study might use a cross-sectional design, providing only a snapshot in time and failing to capture long-term impacts of the agreement.

- Potential lack of control groups to compare against, making it difficult to attribute observed changes solely to the agreement.

Practical Limitations

4. Access to Information:

- Confidentiality agreements and proprietary information might restrict access to crucial data and documents.

- Limited access to high-level executives or key decision-makers for interviews.

5. Resource Constraints:

- Time and budget limitations may restrict the depth and breadth of the research.

- Limited manpower to conduct extensive field observations or in-depth interviews.

6. Geographical Constraints:

- Difficulty in accessing remote locations or multiple sites for on-ground observations and data collection.

7. Measurement Issues:

- Challenges in developing reliable and valid measurement instruments for complex constructs like operational efficiency or stakeholder satisfaction.
- Potential inaccuracies in self-reported data.

Contextual Limitations

8. External Influences:

- External factors such as economic conditions, regulatory changes, or political instability might affect the agreement's outcomes, making it difficult to isolate the effects of the partnership itself.

9. Temporal Constraints:

- Short duration of the study might not capture long-term effects and benefits of the agreement.
- Rapidly changing industry dynamics may lead to findings becoming quickly outdated.

المراجع:

-

[WAS](#)

[The Medi Telegraph](#)

[Container news](#)

[Offshore-energy](#)

[The Maritime Executive](#)

I just wanted to thank everyone who will be reviewing my research, and I look forward to hearing your recommendations and opinions.