LIMBURG GRADUATE SCHOOL of BUSINESS

Doctor of Philosophy

PhD

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Research Excellence in Logistics Management

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

in Logistics Management

In partnership with

Swiss School of Management
Rome, Italy

Courier and Logistics Management Institute
Lagos, Nigeria

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Programme Outline

Content

Imprint

Prospectus
PhD Programme Outline

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Illustrations: H. J. Didier

State of Content 12/2018

Introduction

Our Mission

Welcome to our PhD programme! The Limburg Graduate School of Business is pleased to introduce you to the PhD in Logistics in partnership with Swiss School of Management (SSM) and Courier Logistics and Management Institute (CLMI).

Objective of this programme is to fulfil the challenging demands which constitute the doctoral level of best practices and quality standards in higher education. The academic purpose is to contribute to existing knowledge and/or to extend it through new discoveries, refinements of existing theories.

The doctoral programme supports graduates in their academic and/or professional career development. The programme is relevant, rich, and academically valid and in line and comparable with national and international standards of higher education. It fulfils the criteria of the process of harmonization of higher education in Europe, and the learning outcomes of the highest level of the European Qualification Framework (EQF-Level 8).

The PhD programme is aimed at meeting the challenging expectations of scrutiny of empirical research, validity and reliability of data, and demonstration of evidence-based and defendable findings and conclusions. All research leading to the award of the degree has to be consistent and scientific. Notwithstanding the theoretical setting, you are encouraged to relate your research to contemporary debates on the impacts of trends and developments, on the economy and on society at large.

The programme provides high-quality doctoral training that equips you with all knowledge and tools needed to produce high quality research in the field of courier, logistics and transportation management. You are not alone in your journey! You will be taught and supervised by our distinguished international faculty members who are experts in logistics management. Our unique research labs will support you in collecting and analyzing your data. We will take you through every step of your PhD study.

We are looking forward to working with you!

Prof. Dr. Robert Goedegebuure (LGSB, SSM)
Prof. Dr. Simon Emeje (CLMI)
Prof. Dr. Massimiliano Bracalé (SSM)
Prof. Dr. h.c. Jovan Didier (LGSB, SSM)

Programme Structure

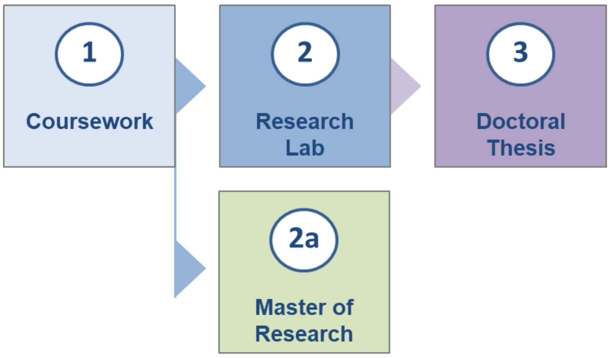
The PhD programme consists of three main consecutive stages:

1. Coursework
2. Research Lab (Data Collection and Analysis)
3. Doctoral Thesis (Write-up and Defense)

Optional Track:

Top-up to Master of Research (MRes)

You have the option to top-up the mandatory coursework to a Master of Research (MRes), by studying additional modules, and submitting a research proposal as final work in stage (2) of the PhD programme.



If the mandatory coursework of stage (1) of the PhD programme has been passed successfully, you are allowed to enter the optional MRes track.

Candidates who follow this optional track have to submit assignments testing their knowledge gained in each of three (3) elective modules. Passing mandatory and additional coursework plus a successful oral defense of the research proposal are prerequisites for being awarded the MRes degree.

General Delivery

Time Frame

In the spirit of problem-oriented learning, the programme will not overload you with coursework. Rather, we will take your initial research idea as the starting point. As the research progresses from idea, to literature review, methodology and data collection and analysis, you will be guided in learning about the appropriate tools and techniques. When needed, you will be given access to any specific modules you need for your research. Guidance comes from dedicated supervisors and from our research labs.

The standard period of study is three years. For improving your research or for adding the MRes, you may apply for an extension of the standard period of studies of up to one year. Such application has to be made in writing and accompanied by an explanation on how such extension contributes to improving their research and thesis. An extension will be granted, too, if for genuine reasons you cannot participate in one or more of the workshops.

The PhD programme is structured as shown below:

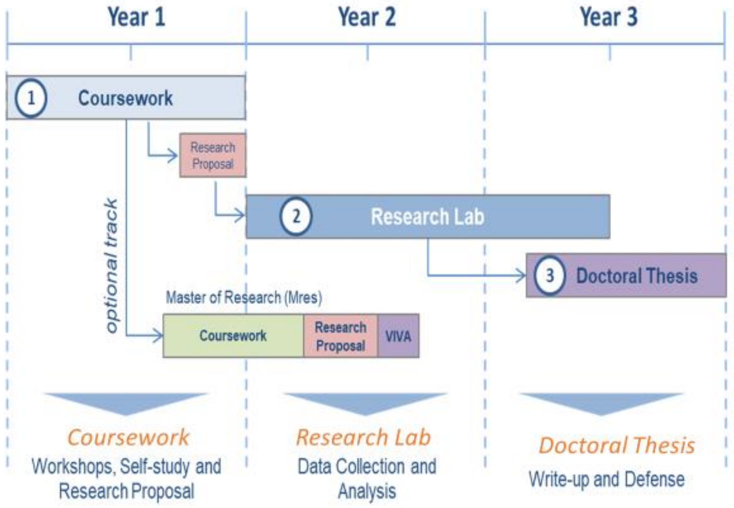
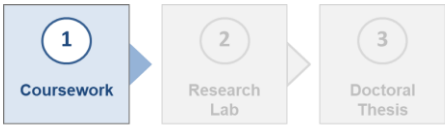


Figure: Timeframe and Programme Structure



Coursework

The first stage of the PhD programme consists of coursework that gives you an overview of the entire research process, and is aimed at acquiring fundamental research skills. You will be trained in basic research methods, and in quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques.

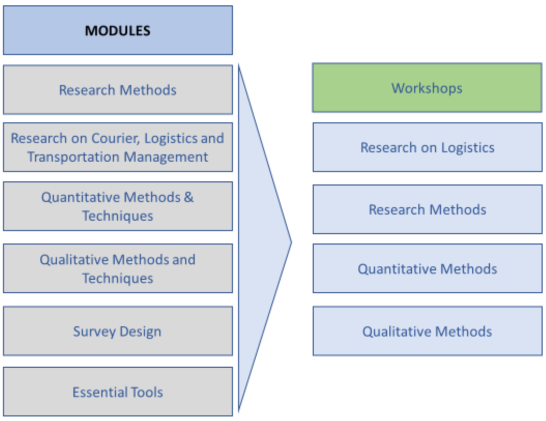
Modules

The coursework consists of the following five **mandatory modules**:

1. Research Methods
2. Quantitative Methods & Techniques
3. Qualitative Methods & Techniques
4. Survey Design
5. Essential Tools (STATA, Excel, R)

Workshops

The five mandatory modules will be delivered in four **workshops**. Each workshop typically covers one or more modules.



All modules can be accessed via our e-learning platform, and have to be prepared before being allowed to the workshop by self-study. You earn certificates for all modules covered, when passing all required assignments. Workshops will be offered throughout the year.

The five mandatory modules are linked to the three workshops as follows:

		Workshops			
	Topics	**(1) Research on Courier, Logistics and Transportation Management**	**(2) Research Methods**	**(3) Quantitative Methods**	**(4) Qualitative Methods & Skills**
	Courier, Logistics and Transportation Management	☑	-	-	-
Modules	Research Methods	☑	☑	☑	☑
	Quantitative Methods & Techniques	-	-	☑	-
	Survey Design	-	-	☑	-
	Qualitative Methods & Techniques	-	-	-	☑
	Essential Tools	-	-	☑	☑

Although each workshop has a clear focus, all workshops will emphasize general issues and skills, like methodology, literature review, and academic writing. No two workshops will ever be the same, and you are welcome to attend workshops even after fulfilling your coursework. The workshops are the perfect opportunity to meet our professors and your fellow students, learn new things and get feedback on your research!

Attendance

Workshop participation is highly recommended. You are advised to attend all workshops.

Assessment

Each workshop, and the related workshops, are assessed in an assignment. The assignments are typically composed of two parts:

1. The first part tests your module-specific knowledge and understanding.
2. The second part challenges you to apply the knowledge gained to your own research project. This helps you in rethinking your research and in building your research proposal in a gradual (and often iterative) manner.

Learning Support

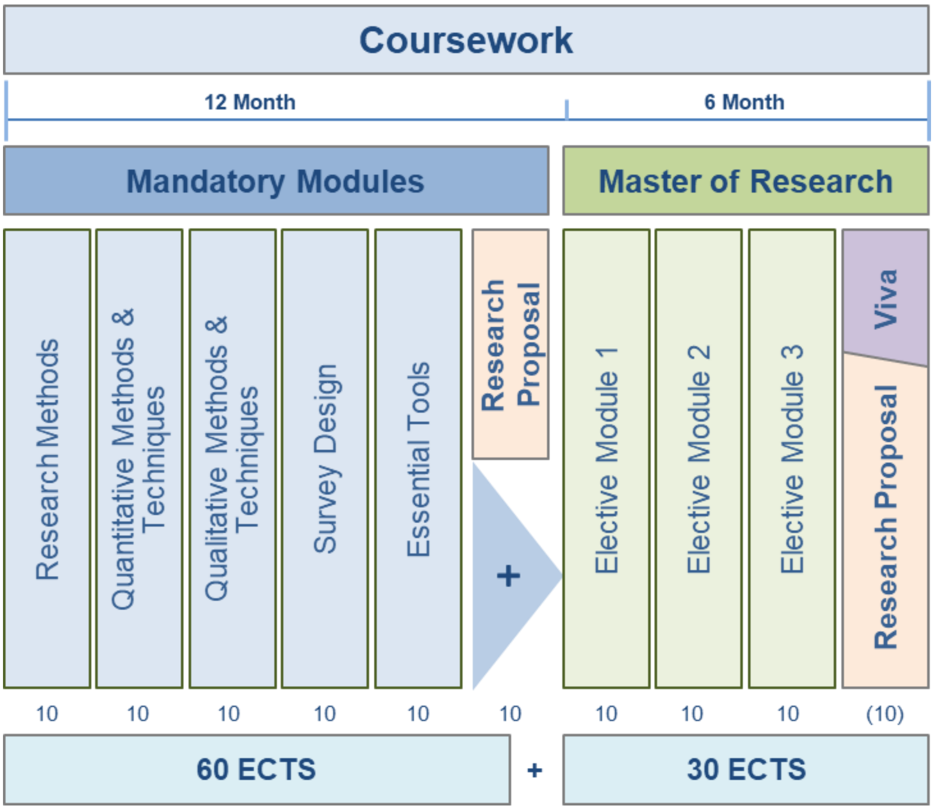
Our blended learning approach is supported by:

- Text books and research papers for each taught subject
- Online library
- Virtual learning environment
- Direct contact with your supervisor
- Direct contact with faculty and professionals at LGSB and CLMI
- Advise from data and methodology experts, from our research labs.

Coursework and Modules

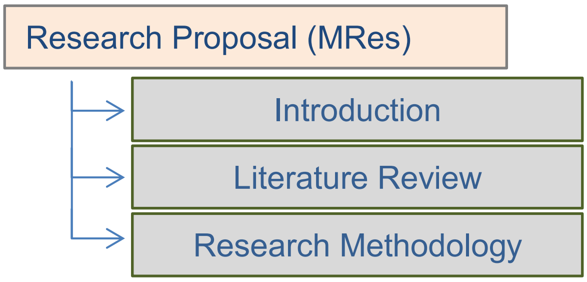
The first stage of PhD studies consists of coursework. The modules encourage student-centered learning. Interactive workshops emphasize student engagement and introduce you to essential strategies of empirical academic research. The interactive structure makes use of debates, discussions, presentations and feedback from fellow students and workshop moderators.

The standard period for coursework (5 mandatory modules plus research proposal) typically takes one year with a total amount of 60 ECTS Credits. Each module earns you 10 ECTS credits.



The **mandatory modules** are assessed by applying the key concepts to your research proposal and culminates in a defendable research proposal. The quality of your research proposal determines the admission to the next stages of the programme. You are allowed to enter the next stage, the **research lab**, once your research proposal is approved.

The **research proposal** earns another 10 ECTS credits. It contains the first three chapters of your doctoral thesis: introduction; literature review; and methodology.



Further information on mandatory modules can be found in the **module description** on the following pages. There you will find a detailed introduction to each module of the first stage of the programme.

The successful completion of the first stage of the PhD programme allows you to enter the Research Lab stage. It also allows you to enter to the optional track, the **Master of Research** (MRes).

Top-up to Master of Research (MRes)

Students who want the top-up to MRes, or those who wish to follow the MRes track only, have to study three additional **elective modules** (10 ECTS Credits each). The MRes concludes with the defense of your research proposal.

The MRes involves an oral examination of the research proposal, a small version of the **viva voce** that concludes your PhD. You will discuss and defend your work in front of a panel of examiners. The panel will primarily assess the relevance and soundness of the research methodology.

1 Coursework | **2 Research Lab** | 3 Doctoral Thesis

Research Lab

Data Collection & Analysis

After successful completion of the coursework and the approval of your research proposal, you will start the fieldwork.

Here, you will collect, edit and analyze data. Supervisors will guide you in this process. In addition, our research labs will assist you in selecting and using the right tools and techniques to do the job. You can ask questions to our data and methodological experts. But even if you don’t ask questions, they will come to you with useful advice!

By the end of the second year you are in a position to wrap up the analyses, and prepare for the write-up. A draft of the fourth chapter of the thesis (data analysis and findings) should be ready!

1 Coursework
2 Research Lab
3 Doctoral Thesis

Doctoral Thesis

Write-up and Defense

The third and final stage of the process is the write-up. Normally this will require additional analyses, and the time-consuming task of presenting findings clearly and free of errors. After six months a draft version should be ready for submission to internal and external readers. Processing readers' comments may take up to three months, after which a date will be set for the oral defense - the so-called **viva voce**.

The **thesis & research outline** provides a guideline to the third stage of the PhD programme.

Participation in additional research-centered activities is not compulsory, but highly recommended.

- Part-publication of the doctoral research in academic journals and other academic publications
- Attendance of academic conferences, especially those providing sessions for doctoral students for getting feedback from peers
- Gaining academic teaching experience through guest lectures on your topic of research
- Joining professional and organizational forums, like CLMI.

Module Outlines

Research Methods

Professional and academic research are vital necessities for modern management to forge ahead. Research is the process of asking the right and relevant questions, and of gathering and analyzing the necessary data in a systematic and methodologically sound manner. An important aspect of sound professional and academic research is embedding your research within the body of existing knowledge (applied research), and to add to it (generating new knowledge).

This module will guide you through the research process, from the formulation of the topic, to critically detecting and reviewing relevant literature, designing the research project and choosing appropriate methodologies, collecting and analyzing the data, and writing the report. Especially for those who are new to research, this workshop will offer a helicopter view of the approaches that researchers use to answer research questions. The other workshops will zoom in on specific parts of the research process, and on specific methodologies and techniques that can be employed.

Learning Objectives

- Formulate your research topic in clear terms.
- Formulate research objectives and questions, and hypotheses and propositions.
- Carry out a critical review of literature relevant to the topic at hand.
- Essential skills in reviewing literature: search for recent and relevant articles in (electronic) libraries and on the Internet; using tools to structure the review; know how to use systematic referencing; summarize the review concisely.
- Understand the key methodologies used in modern research. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Creatively combine various approaches to generate relevant data.
- Have a good knowledge of the various methods of data collection.
- Be familiar with statistical concepts like sampling, and hypothesis testing. Have an understanding of the main statistical (descriptive and inferential) techniques used to analyze data.
- Know how to structure the report, and the main requirements of a high quality professional or academic report.
- Be familiar with ethical considerations in research, including the concept of plagiarism.

Assessment

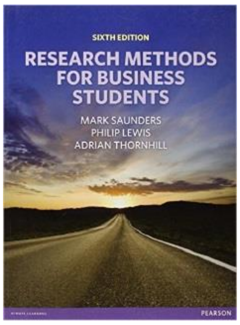
The assessment will be based on one assignment. The assignment consists of two parts. In part one you will be asked to evaluate parts of a sample research proposal written by somebody else. In the second part you are invited to draft a rough plan for your own research project. In the assignment you are asked to:

- Clearly describe the topic
- Formulate research objectives and questions
- Identify and summarize at least five articles relevant to the study
- Design your research (in terms of approaches; methodologies; and strategies), and to motivate why the chosen design is effective in meeting the research objectives.

Literature and other study material

The textbook for this course is:

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 6th Edition. Pearson Education Limited. ISBN: 978-0-273-75075-8



Research Articles

You are expected to read these works. They will be made available online, before the module commences.

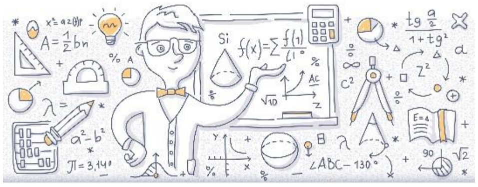
Further Reading / Recommended Text:

- Creswell, J.W. 2013. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods
- Approaches. 4th ed London: Sage Publications.
- Howell, K.E. 2012. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology. London: Sage Publications.
- Bryman, A. 2012. Social Research Methods. 4th ed Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yin, R. K. 2013. Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods). 5th ed Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Thomson, P. and Kamler, B. 2016. Detox Your Writing: Strategies for Doctoral Researchers. Abingdon: Routledge.

Quantitative Methods & Survey Design

Numbers play an important role in research. Statistical skills are critical to understanding a lot of what goes on in society.

Many of us find statistics hard. One reason is that understanding statistics requires mathematical skills. The required mathematical skills seldom go beyond basic operations that all students are assumed to be familiar with – adding, subtracting, multiplication and division. This module will introduce you to basic and advanced statistics in an intuitive way. Concepts are introduced using examples that you will easily recognize from daily life. Although we refrain from discussing advanced topics in statistics, the workshop paves the way to exploring more advanced statistics.



A second reason why some students have a fear of statistics is the gap that exists between understanding the statistical concepts on the one hand and applying the concepts to reality. This workshop introduces you to descriptive and inferential statistics. All techniques will be illustrated with easy-to-understand examples.

In the process, this workshop will zoom in on important topics in survey design: sampling techniques; validity and reliability; and data cleaning.

Learning Objectives

- Ability to design a survey (sample; questionnaire)
- Understand basic descriptive statistics
- Understand the concepts used in inferential statistics
- Understand which statistical tests and techniques can be used in a variety of settings
- Be able to perform, interpret and report statistical tests.

Assessment

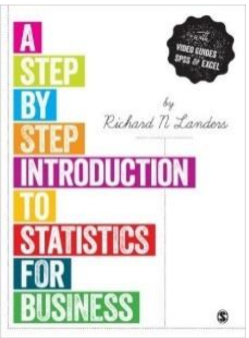
You will be assessed in one assignment.

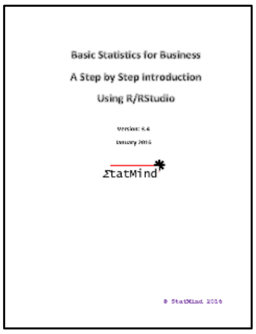
The assignment will challenge you to draft a plan of analysis, for your research, based on a draft of the data collection instrument to be used in the research.

Literature and other study material

The textbooks for this course are:

Landers, N. (2014). *A Step by Step Introduction to Statistics for Business.* ISBN: 978-1-4462-08212-2 (pbk).



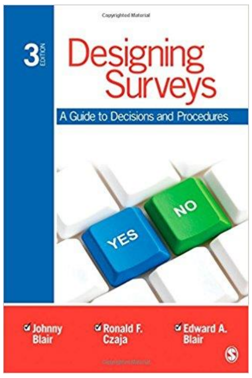


StatMind (2017),
Business Statistics: A Step by Step Introduction Using R. Version 3.5

StatMind (2018),
Business Statistics: *A Step by Step Introduction Using STATA*. Version 2.0

Recommended Text:

Blair, J., Czaja, R.F. and Blair, E. (2014), *Designing Surveys: A Guide to Decisions and Procedures.* 3rd Edition. Sage



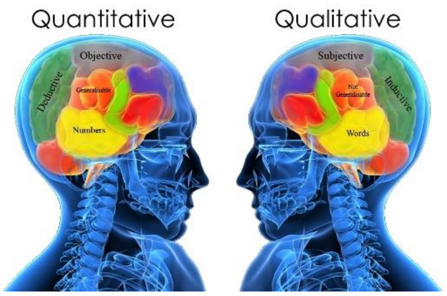
Further Reading:

- Fowler, F. J. 2013. Survey Research Methods. 5th ed London: Sage Publications.
- Howell, K.E. 2012. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology. London: Sage Publications.
- Walter M. 2013. Social Research Methods. 3rd ed Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Qualitative Methods

This workshop is designed to help qualitative researchers with all aspects of their qualitative research project from start to finish. It discusses the key philosophies underpinning qualitative research and design – with a focus on research in management – and assesses the key advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches.

We will zoom in on key aspects of research design for qualitative studies. The core part of the workshop elaborates qualitative research methods that have been touched upon in the workshop on research methods: action research; case study research; ethnographic research; grounded theory; interviews; participant observation; and document analysis. All techniques will discuss the various approaches of that technique, along with strengths and weaknesses, and examples. In a separate block the workshop will discuss the analysis of qualitative data, which is fundamentally different from analyzing quantitative data. After an overview of the various methods and techniques that can be used when analyzing qualitative data – including the use of dedicated software – the principles of hermeneutics, semiotics and narrative analysis will be taught and trained.



In a concluding block the workshop will address issues of write-up and publication, with a focus on the differences from writing up non-qualitative studies.

Learning Objectives

- Familiarize the participants with the fundamentals of qualitative research
- Understand the pros and cons of qualitative research as compared to quantitative research
- Have a sound understanding of the various methods and techniques in qualitative research
- Ability to use the various methods and techniques of qualitative research
- Obtain the various skills needed for carrying out qualitative research: formulating and asking questions; listening; summarizing; analyze qualitative data; write-up.

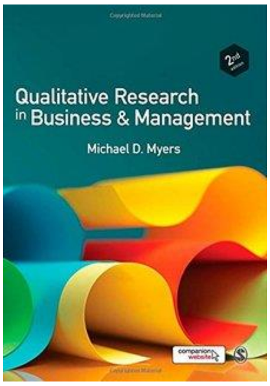
Assessment

The assignment will be based on the application of various methods and techniques of qualitative research to your own research (even if your study will be mainly quantitative).

Literature and other study material

The textbook for this course is:

Myers, M.D. (2013).
Qualitative Research in Business and Management.
Sage Publications.



Further Reading:

- Birks, M. 2015. Grounded Theory: Practical Guide. 2nd ed London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. 2013. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. 4th ed London: Sage Publications.
- Remler, D.K. and van Ryzin, G.G. 2010. Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation. London: Sage Publications.
- Ritchie, J. 2013. Qualitative Research Practice. 2nd ed London: Sage Publications.
- Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V. 2006. Data Collection and Analysis. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Yin, R.K. 2013. Case Study Research: Design and Methods. 5th ed. London: Sage Publications.

Research Articles

These will be disseminated before or during the module and updated before it commences.

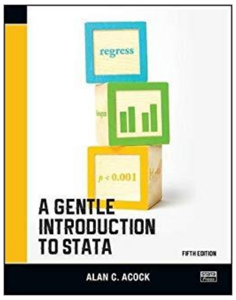
Essential Tools

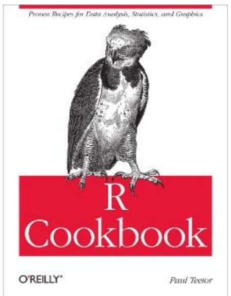
The module will introduce you to essential tools for doing research at doctoral level. The toolbox offers a rich set of tools. The focus will be on STATA. The STATA package is one of the main packages used by researchers doing serious research. A fully operational permanent license for the latest version of STATA is included in the study fees.

This module will also introduce you to a variety of other software packages, most of which are open source and can be downloaded and used for free.

The focus in this module is on data management and data visualization, and you will learn how to use the essential tools on the fly – not as an end in itself.

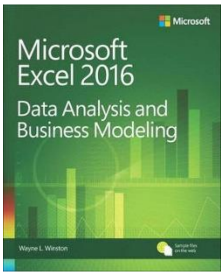
Acock, A. (2016). *A Gentle Introduction to STATA*. STATA Press





http://www.cookbook-r.com/
https://www.statmethods.net/

Winston, W.L. (2016). *Microsoft Excel 2016: Data Analysis and Business Modeling*. Microsoft Press



Thesis and Research Outline

You are required to submit a doctoral thesis which fulfils the criteria of independent academic research.

The research presented in your thesis has to be empirically robust and demonstrate your understanding of theory, your ability to undertake academic research independently and to draw critical conclusions from relevant analysis of data.

You have to defend your research in the viva voce. A defendable thesis is characterized by:

- Robustness
- Consistency and coherency
- Empirical reliability and validity
- Academic relevance
- Convincing logic of findings and conclusions
- Respect for research ethics.

Thesis Topic

Candidates are requested to submit a doctoral thesis with a topic that has to fit in with the joint research agenda of the organizers of this specialized PhD programme: courier, logistics and transportation management.

The research agenda, and ideas for research for PhD in Logistics Management, are presented at the end of this document.

Size of the Thesis

There are no hard rules for the size of the thesis. Normally, theses are in the range from 120 to 200 pages, or 50,000 to 100,000 words (excluding annexes). A concise writing style, avoiding duplications and redundancies, is strongly preferred to thesis that contain a lot of “air”.

Admission to the Thesis

The successful completion of the coursework and approval of the research proposal are prerequisites to start the thesis.

Formal Structure of the Doctoral Thesis

The doctoral thesis has the same format as the research proposal regarding fonts, size of fonts, referencing, and other structural or formal components. Regarding the thesis chapters, students are free to organize these as their thesis requires. This does not constitute any reduction of the scientific and/or academic elements making a doctoral thesis (e.g., literature review and methodology).

The preferred thesis structure is the five-chapter structure: introduction and background; literature review; methodology; data analysis and findings; and conclusions. An alternative structure is based on (accepted and/or published) journal articles. A minimum of three articles, preceded by an introductory chapter, and ended with a concluding chapter, is allowed. The articles have to form a coherent whole.

Doctoral Supervision Process

You will be supported by an individually allocated **doctoral supervisor** selected on the basis of expertise in your subject area and/or methodology of the thesis. The doctoral supervisor will assist a PhD candidate in the duration of the research.

You and your supervisor will closely work together and meet each other by individually and mutually agreed ways and forms of supervision. Supervision can take place by personal meetings and/or distance supervision using electronic communication channels you and your supervisor mutually agree on. Supervision sessions are documented by the doctoral supervisor in progress reports.

You are entitled to a total of 48 (forty-eight) hours of supervision.

Our research labs will review the quality of all works submitted in the research process, with an emphasis on methodologies employed and data analysis. You and your supervisor can seek the advice of the research labs, free of cost. The responsibility for the quality of the thesis rests with you, at all times.

Thesis Writing Duration and Extension

The elaboration of the research until submission of the thesis is taking place within a period of six months in the third and final stage of the PhD programme. This is followed by an estimated three (3) months for assessment and three (3) months for organizing the viva. Extensions to this standard period of studies may be granted by evidence-based individual application of a student.

In the case of unexpected interruption, illness or other serious affectations, a PhD candidate is invited to apply for mitigating circumstances. Applications for mitigating circumstances have to be accompanied by tangible evidence. We will carefully consider the circumstances and decide by respecting these carefully. The decision made by the **board of examiners** is final.

If mitigating circumstances are granted, an extension of a maximum of 12 months is possible. The granted period of extension can vary by consideration of the impact of the reasons on a student's thesis.

An extension beyond the maximum period of studies of five (5) years is not possible. The only exception is by amendments the Doctoral Jury requests in the viva.

Submission of the Thesis

Submissions can be made electronically via the online-system and/or by three printed and bound hardcopies sent to the Board of Examiners. Each thesis has to include the Declaration of Honor, in which the PhD candidate declares in lieu of an oath that their submitted work:

- Is purely their own
- Has not been submitted completely or in parts to any other higher education institution before
- Is not copied from any third party
- Nor written by a so-called ghost-writer of any kind
- That all use of third-party work is fully referenced by acknowledged standards of citation and referencing in APA style.

The Board of Examiners will call a **Viva Committee** of doctoral academics, of which two will individually assess the thesis during the viva in addition to the written reports admitting the thesis to the viva. The doctoral supervisor will only be a supporting member of the Viva Committee, but can neither chair the Viva Committee, nor assess the thesis.

Viva Voce

Latest six (6) months after submission, the Viva Committee will invite the PhD candidate to the viva. In this viva the PhD candidate will defend his/her thesis through a summarizing presentation.

The Viva Committee will provide feedback on the PhD candidate's scientific and academic achievements. Clarifying questions may be asked by discretion of any member of the Viva Board at any time during the Viva.

The Viva Committee consists of a minimum of three academics. The viva is in principle open to the public. The decision on the awarded degree will be achieved by majority of the voting jury members of the Viva Committee. For their vote members of the Viva Committee will take into consideration

- The two written assessments before the Viva
- The student's performance during their Viva.

PhD candidates who are not successful (fail) or who are requested to make improvements or amendments to their first thesis attempt, will be granted an extension by the Viva Committee of up to six (6) months maximum for necessary improvements. This period may vary by respecting the amount of improvements to be done. A second viva will take place then, which will follow the same regulations and process.

For only minor amendments the Viva Committee will decide, whether a second Viva will take place or whether the final acceptance of the thesis can be decided by Chair's action. Such decision mainly depends on the requested extent of amendments to be made.

Should a student fail again to achieve the acceptance of their thesis, no further attempt exists and the student will have to finish his studies without the intended PhD Degree.

Generally excluded is a complete second attempt of the thesis. If a thesis is assessed by both assessors as insufficient (fail) before admission to the viva, a student will not be allowed to completely rewrite the thesis or start an entirely new thesis (on the same topic or on a different topic; using the same data or after collecting new data).

Academic Misconduct

Students violating the Declaration of Honor of their thesis in any case, will be informed in writing that doubts exist about the origin of their work. These doubts will be accompanied by a written report.

On doctoral level such issue is assessed as being so serious that a formal Cheating Committee will be formed. This committee will consist of at least two academics, who will evaluate the case presented. The student will be heard and can defend his case. If the student cannot provide full evidence that the doubts raised are unjustified, this may result in the student's exclusion from completion of the PhD degree. The decision of the Cheating Committee is binding.

Cheating Committees may take place even after a PhD candidate has graduated. This will be the case, if the awarding institution is made aware of academic misconduct, which has not been discovered earlier. If a graduate is found guilty this may lead to the revokement of the degree awarded.

Further Processes and Regulations

Further processes and regulations are documented in PhD Student Handbook. These are part of the documentation of and for this degree and its award.

Conclusion

Minor changes or amendments to this PhD Programme Outline may be made in the effort of continuous quality and academic improvement.

The Research Proposal Outline

(Master of Research - MRes)

The research proposal in the Master of Research (MRes) and the following doctoral thesis are both part of individual and independent research. The research proposal of the Master of Research is undertaken under the guidance of an allocated supervisor.

The research proposal is focused on the doctoral research, and will be expanded and implemented in the next stages of the programme.

The topic needs to address the economic and management sciences. It is essential is for the research proposal to provide evidence of the candidate's capability to independent academic research on doctoral level.

Research Proposal Requirements

- Submission of a research proposal document which consists of 12,000 to 20,000 words, or 25 to 40 pages (annexes excluded).
- Submission within 18 months after the start of the programme.

Admission to the Research Proposal

The research Proposal module can only be started, when all taught modules and all additional elective modules have been successfully completed.

Structural Outline

The Research Proposal has to be submitted either electronically or printed in a bound style. Submission has to be made latest on the due date by 18:00 hours of the indicated deadline. The Research Proposal must present on the title page

- The title of the research
- Full name of the candidate
- Student number
- Date of submission
- Name of supervisor

On the following page the declaration of originality of the work has to be presented, in which the student confirms that the submitted research proposal is their own work and that all citations, external graphics and reports are fully referenced.

On page 3 a full table of content has to be presented (including appendices), followed by the index of graphics, the index of tables, the index of abbreviations used.

- At the end of the thesis (but before any appendices) the full list of references is presented; the reference style is APA.
- Allowed fonts are Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman or Garamond at 12.0 size, 1.5 space
- Graphics and tables have to be numbered and to present a headline in bold, 10.0 size; for tables above the table, for graphics and illustrations below these.

Not meeting formal requirements, and repeated spelling and grammar mistakes, are not accepted and have to be corrected before the viva can take place.

Language difficulties of non-native speakers will be respected, but to limited extent only. Non-native speakers are advised seeking support from native speakers. It is clearly expressed that such language support is only allowed for:

- Language improvements
- Cannot alter, extend or amend content in any way or form
- Has to be stated in the given declaration to which an additional declaration adds confirming that such support was only related to language improvements of non-native speakers.

For native speakers no such support is allowed.

Topic of the Research Proposal

The topic of the research proposal must be fully aligned with the following doctoral research and doctoral thesis.

Content of the Research Proposal

In their research proposal students will explain, why their doctoral research

- will be important for their chosen field of knowledge in economic and management sciences
- what the research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

This part will constitute the background and justification of the doctoral research.
The second part of the Research Proposal will

- Assess the existing and actual body of knowledge
- Critically discuss the existing body of actual knowledge through literature – research and texts – identifying what knowledge exists, what it contributes, and where students have identified specific gaps to which their doctoral research will contribute

This part, which has to contain thoroughly rich secondary data, forms an inventory of what is known and to which extent the research problem of the research is relevant.

The third part is explaining and justifying the methodology of the research in precise form in which consistency of the research philosophy and the according research strategy will demonstrate fit.

Fourthly, the research proposal will provide evidence of the methodology and the scientific contribution to knowledge through primary data, gathered. This is accompanied by an accurate and detailed research plan.

Assessment of the Research Proposal

The assessment of the research proposal is based on

- Relevance of the doctoral research and its scientific value
- High level of academic depth and criticality
- Logic and relevance of argumentation
- Robustness and relevance of the methodology
- Concise assessment of the existing body of knowledge in the specific field of the research incorporating based on peer-reviewed and journal articles and research papers, conference proceedings, book publications, relevant statistical reports, policy documents and other academically acceptable publications
- Narrative style, presentation and structure of the research proposal.

Supervision

An individual supervisor will be allocated to each student. The supervisor will review the chapters submitted and provide guidance, but no meticulous corrections. It is the task of the student to request supervision sessions and to arrange these with the allocated supervisor. The supervisor will not unnecessarily delay the request for supervision.

Supervision sessions can be personal, by Skype, email, and chat forums or other means on which supervisor and student mutually agree.

PhD-project Logistics in Nigeria

General Information

The PhD-programme *Courier, Logistics & Transportation Management* is organized by Swiss School of Management (SSM) and Limburg Graduate School of Business (LGSB), in collaboration with Courier and Logistics Management Institute (CLMI).

PhD research projects that fit in with the research tracks and research objectives of this programme, are sponsored by LGSB's Round Table Africa project in the form of partial scholarships of 60% of the normal fee for PhD. The PhD degree is awarded by SSM. SSM is IACBE accredited, and EduQua certified.

Partial Scholarships and Financial Arrangements

Candidates whose research topics are approved as relevant to the research agenda, will receive a partial scholarship of 60% of the normal study fee. The net study fee for 2018/2019 is set at US$ 15,000, to be paid in six equal installments of US$ 2,500 at the start of each semester. Candidates who want to top-up their coursework to Master of Research, have to pay an additional US$ 1,500 (US$ 500, for three extra modules).

A non-refundable application fee of US$ 100 applies.

TRACK 1: A Macro-Economic Perspective

1.1 Introduction

Infrastructure is claimed to be, if not the engine, the wheels of the economy (World Bank, 1994; Rodriguez, 2006). Many studies based on time series analysis, show high correlations between aggregate investments in infrastructure and economic growth. Comparative studies across countries, suggest that the same holds true for emerging economies. However, correlation is not the same as causality, and the results may very well be due to reversed causality – where higher levels of GDP lead to investments in infrastructure rather than the other way around. Empirical analysis on the growing economic disparities between rich and poor countries suggests that, indeed, a positive effect of infrastructure provision on economic growth and productivity; however, there is no indication that differences in infrastructure provisions have contributed substantially to increasing disparities (Rodriguez, 2006).

The logistics industry is important in enhancing the competitiveness of other industries (Serez & Abasiz, 2017). Serez and Abasiz, from their study on OECD-countries, conclude that railroad freight transportation has little impact on economic growth, in contrast to airline freight transportation, length of the highway and railroad networks. Telecommunications and communications variables like all contributed to the economic growth positively. Overall, they conclude that developments in the logistics industry in OECD countries were the dominant determinants of economic growth.

Kauschke et al (2010), in a scenario analysis of global trends predict that global supply chains will change dramatically, whereby trade volumes are expected to shift towards emerging economies. This implies that it is more important than ever for emerging economies to catch up with developed countries.

In this respect, it is worrisome that over the last decade, Nigeria has slipped down the ranks of the Logistic Performance Index (LPI; https://lpi.worldbank.org/). Nigeria's fell back from rank 75 in 2014, to rank 90 in 2016, and rank 110 in 2018. The relative rank in figure 1 below, indicates that while Nigeria held a middle position in 2014, around 70% of the 160 countries included in the LPI-survey perform better than Nigeria.

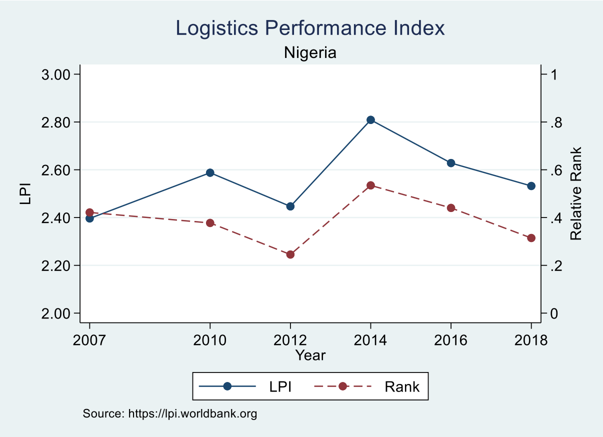


Figure 1. LPI of Nigeria 2007-2018

The LPI is composed of several components: customs; infrastructure; ease of shipments; logistics quality; track & trace; and timeliness (more information can be found in the LPI-methodology (World Bank, 2014). The overall LPI is a weighted mean of the scores on these components. While Nigeria is doing relatively well on timeliness, it performs poorly on customs. See figure 2.

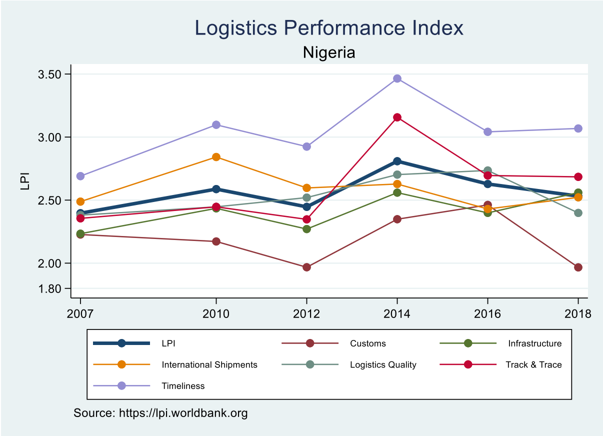


Figure 2. LPI-Scores Nigeria on LPI Components

The LPI-scores of Nigeria, can be compared to those of other countries. In figure 3, we have selected some of the larger and top-performing countries (Netherlands; China; US), along with some African countries (Kenya; South Africa; Niger). The figure shows stable positions for the larger and high-performing countries, and declining scores for all African countries. By implication, based on the studies on the relationship between logistics and economic growth, this is a (either leading or lagging) indicator of economic disparity.

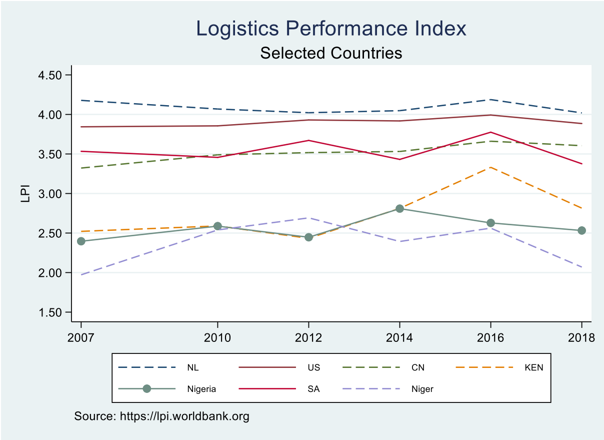


Figure 3. LPI-scores of Nigeria versus Other Countries

1.2 Research Questions

From this macro-perspective on the status quo of logistics in Nigeria, the following research questions are of relevance.

1.1. What do more detailed and specific longitudinal data for Nigeria reveal about the contribution of investments in, and quality of infrastructure (logistics; transportation)?

1.2. How have government policies and institutions in Nigeria contributed to the lower LPI-scores and rankings?

1.3. What are the priorities in policy-making for the next decade, in terms of the components of the LPI, for Nigeria?

1.4. Can we gain a deeper understanding of the functioning of Nigeria's logistics industry, in order to get the story behind the LPI-score for Nigeria? Which additional indicators are needed to develop an extended LPI for Nigeria, as a tool for monitoring progress and assessing the impact of policies?

Each of these research questions can be the basis of a PhD-project.

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TRACK 2: HIGH performance IN LOGISTICS

2.1 Introduction

Over the last decades we have witnessed the emergence of a multitude of high-performance models that allegedly can help organizations improve their performance. Many of these models have been developed by consultancy companies who tend to favor one-size-fits-all approaches; that is, it is suggested that one and the same model can be applied across industries and across borders. One such framework is the High-Performance Organization (HPO) model developed by De Waal (2012). The interesting aspect of this model is that the claim of universal applicability seems to be supported by academic research. The HPO-model identifies five factors (continuous improvement; openness & action orientation; management quality; employee quality; and long-term orientation) that jointly provide the holy grail of organizational performance.

A closer and critical look at the HPO-model reveals that the diagnostic framework of 35 items and the five factors aforementioned, has serious shortcomings (Goedegebuure, 2018). Even though the core of the model seems to apply to many types of organizations across industries and countries, it is argued that (i) the model is incomplete, and has to extended by adding situation-specific factors; and (ii) the diagnostic framework itself has methodological flaws.

The model has not yet been tested in logistical companies, and has not been tested in Nigeria. The challenge is to build a methodologically sound HPO-model that incorporates the idiosyncrasies of the country and the sector under study.

2.2 Research Questions

2.1. Which are the factors (dimensions) of high performance in the logistics sector in Nigeria? What can we learn from existing HPO-frameworks, and which elements are missing, to inform logistics companies in Nigeria about improved performance?

2.2. Can we develop and apply an extended HPO-model to specific logistic companies in Nigeria? Do interventions using any extended model, lead to improved performance?

2.3. How can organizational performance of logistics companies be defined? Apart from the obvious hard indicators of performance (say, short- or medium-term profits and growth), the performance of modern companies is not only to the benefit of shareholders; there is a wider set of stakeholders (government; customers; employees; and society at large) that stands to benefit from the performance of companies in this sector. Obvious examples of nonfinancial performance are the level of innovation leading to ecofriendly processes, contribution to road safety, and the improved performance of other sectors that are dependent on logistics.

2.4. Is it possible to use existing or extended HPO-models to detect best-practice companies in the logistics sector in Nigeria?

2.5. Is it possible to develop one or more revised HPO-models for (several types of) logistics companies in Nigeria? To what extent can we make use of a standard set of factors and items in a diagnostic framework (and to what extent do we need to add organization-specific items)?

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TRACK 3: Nigerian Logistic Challenges and lessons from the present and past

3.1 Introduction

A fundamental research topic in logistics can be drawn from the past and present awareness, meaning and challenges of trade logistics, with the aim of Nigerian logistics meeting future demands and contributing to Nigerian economic and social development. There are gaps between urban and rural communities in all aspects of economic and social life, for instance in the access to financial institutions and digital services. In this respect we can also refer to social inclusion seen as the provision of rights to all individuals and groups in society, such as employment, adequate housing, health care, power education, training, information (including access to internet). Nigeria has relatively low scores on both the Logistic Performance Index (LPI) and the Human Development Index (HDI). A social definition of logistics could read as *the whole of actions, means, information and labor – and coherent coordination thereof*. A society needs to efficiently organize and practice the timely, reliable and safe transport, provision, storage, issuing and distribution of goods, services, people and information in the way and at the level society wants it.

3.2 Research Questions

3.1. What *is* logistics in Nigeria? Describe and quantify the most important trade flows, to and from Nigeria, and how these are organized in all aspects: historical, economic, political, demographic, social, and digital contexts.

3.2. Who are the key players: the transporters, the haulers, the distributors, the couriers, the warehouses, the fulfilment players, the e-commerce platforms, and other stakeholders?

3.3. What is the nature of goods, the size of volumes, values, value added and contribution to economy and society e, employment, and the state of the infrastructure?

3.4. What are the visions and ongoing policies, regarding courier, logistics, transportation and infrastructure in Nigeria?

3.5. Can we set up a high-quality data base on some or all of the above aspects, as a necessary tool for academic and professional researchers, and policymakers?

3.6. What are conclusions and recommendations about gaps, challenges, directions, financial, digital and social inclusion aiming at and contributing to the Nigerian economic and social development?

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TRACK 4: Nigerian E-Commerce

4.1 Introduction

E-commerce means a shifting from physical shop retail to online shopping. The economic and social consequences are enormous. For instance, the increase in parcel logistics increases demand for fulfilment, transport, distribution, warehousing, reverse logistics, and paying solutions. Increased access to Internet, further penetration of smart phones, and the number of banked people boost online shopping.

In Nigeria, in 2016, almost 39% of the population is banked (Efina, 2016). Internet usage grew to 103 million users in May 2018 (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2018). At the business side, opportunities for SMEs expand when they gain access to e-commerce platforms. There are constraints:

- Struggles with international banking transactions: some African countries pose restrictions on the amount of money that can be transferred across borders, while some only accept payments from foreign credit card holders through expensive intermediaries, due to the lack of international links within local African banking systems.
- Exclusion from international platforms for e-commerce: negative perceptions about doing business in Africa translate into African SMEs being blocked from listing their products on international platforms.

- Poor infrastructure: local and regional physical infrastructure are poor in many parts of Africa, with underdeveloped roads, ports and air transportation and unreliable electricity.
- Inexperience with import duties and sales taxes.
- Compliance with banking regulations and related private-sector rules are yet another challenge for many on the African continent, as are trust and perceived security issues.
- Socio-political barriers: governments and local African institutions are not doing enough to create local services and structures in support of small businesses. Companies are challenged by the cultural requirements of doing business across borders, such as foreign language skills and customer service differences within varied markets.
- Overregulation: building on the previous point, governments need to work harder to help the small and medium businesses, rather than hinder them with overregulation. In many parts of Africa, requirements from government make it difficult for the businesses to thrive.
- Internet connectivity in Africa continues to lag behind to other regions, although the gap is closing rapidly thanks to mobile Internet.

Source: Pedroncelli (2017)

4.2 Research Questions

4.1. Which (economic, financial, social, political, infrastructural and cultural) conditions must be met in Nigeria to make on line shopping accessible to all Nigerians? Can we draw the Nigerian e-commerce map for 2025?

4.2. How can Nigerian SMEs take advantage from e-commerce and thereby contribute to economic and social growth?

4.3. How can existing retail and distribution networks (shops and outlets; post offices; banks; fuel stations; and so on) be used in e-commerce delivery and product returns?

4.3 References

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TRACK 5: Infrastructure

5.1 Introduction

Logistics - in terms of storage, transport and distribution - requires good infrastructure. It needs physical infrastructure in the form of roads, railways, airports, harbors, vans, trucks, trains, ships, plains, warehouses, power and fuel. Physical infrastructure is provided by federal, state and/or local governments and private sector initiatives and investments. Sometimes international aid plays a part.

Logistics also requires a legal infrastructure of rules and laws to regulate national and international trade and customs, and international trade agreements. For instance, in letter and parcel distribution and logistics around the world national postal organizations have a national monopoly and a distribution obligation for letters and parcels varying from 500 grams to several kilograms (see https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Reserved_area).

In Nigeria the newly presented postal bill (about to pass) has a reserved area for NIPOST in the distribution of letters/parcels up to 1 kilo. This means that couriers and other logistic service providers cannot move in this reserved area. The reality however is different, with couriers delivering more profitable business mail and parcels especially in the transport wise cheaper and more accessible urban areas. There is no real effective regulator enforcing postal bill yet (cf. https://nass.gov.ng/document/download/9911).

5.2 Research Questions:

5.1. What kind of logistic infrastructure is needed in Nigeria?
- For trade of goods?
- For transport of people?

5.2. What are the infrastructural constraints in the public sector and in the private sector?

5.3. What kind of national regulation is needed, and is the needed regulation in place?

5.4. What are the constraints to international trade and to e-commerce? And which conditions have to be met to lower the thresholds for international trade and e-commerce?

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TRACK 6: Commercial Perspectives of Logistics

6.1 Introduction

There is a commercial dichotomy between state-owned logistics organizations, otherwise operationally called parastatals in Nigerian or African parlance, and private-owned logistics companies. Such logistics organizations include Aviation, Motor transport, Postal Service, Distribution, and Shipping. The primary function of state-owned logistics organizations is the production and sale of goods and services in which the national government has an ownership stake that is sufficient to ensure its control over the enterprise. The approach in the use of state-owned logistics organizations for resource mobilization or allocation is in harmony with the Keynesian approach to economic development, especially in the post 1930 global economic depression. The argument in this approach is that as African countries develop, such organizations would remain permanently dominant in logistics sub-sector. Over the decades, state-owned logistics organizations in African countries have remained the cardinal instrument for the stimulation and allocation of public investment resources, acceleration of economic development and the determination of government finances. Over the years, the activities of these organizations increased and resulted in expansion of public expenditure. For instance, in the mid-1980s, such organizations and other related ones in Africa were about 3,000 out of which Nigeria had 21%, as compared to Ghana (6%), and Cote d'Ivoire (5%).

Despite the large number of the state-owned logistics organizations in Africa, the common problem is the large share of public finances they have without the commensurate performance or benefits either in form of physical output supply to match local demands and profitability or resource transfer to the respective governments. The persistent poor performance of the organizations has been criticized, especially in the 1980s as the macroeconomic policy environment arising from the impacts of the world economic crisis was less accommodating to the resulting inefficiency in resource allocation.

The dissatisfaction with the performance of these organizations in keeping pace with their set objectives has favored the argument for the enthronement of neo-liberal economic orthodoxy. The conservative economic orthodoxy is formed by the policy of commercialization and privatization which emphasizes sharp contraction of such organizations and a more dominant private sector participation in economic activities as a panacea to the various socio-economic and political problems.

The dilemma in this scenario is that while such state-owned logistics organizations could not charge commercial rates and performed very poorly, the private logistics companies that took over some of the organizations through the policy of commercialization and privatization have also been rated low in performance as a result of government regulatory policies and inadequate provision of infrastructure. What then is the way forward?

6.2 Research Questions

6.1. What is the relevance of the policy of commercialization and privatization of the state-owned logistics organizations?

6.2. Inadequate provision of infrastructure is a major clog in the performance of logistics companies. Most governments in Africa have not been able to address this challenge. How can this situation be alleviated?

6.3. One of the problems that led to inadequate performance of the state-owned logistics organizations is the inability to charge commercial rates as a result of the social element in the rendition of the services. The governments are said not to be ready to pay the difference between the commercial rates and the social service rates. How can this be addressed?

6.4. Will the professional approach to the logistics activities bring about the needed contribution to the economic development of the African economies?

6.5. Logistics organizations are capital intensive. The needed finance for organizational performance is described as far-fetched. What is the way out?

6.3 References

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TRACK 7: Policy Perspectives of Logistics

7.1 Introduction

As in other sectors of the economy of various countries in Africa and the world at large, there are some specific policies that have been formulated to govern the operation of logistics. Such policies are predominantly regulatory in nature.

As an observable phenomenon in many countries, regulation is a means for public authorities to regain control over a rapidly evolving sector like the logistics sub-sector. In many countries, including Nigeria, lack of proper regulation has hampered market development and undermined the viability of the logistics industry. The issue of regulation has arisen as part of new trends driving trade in services, particularly over the course of the last two decades of the twentieth century.

The major functions of any national regulatory authority in the logistics sub-sector are on:

- Logistics markets;
- System integrity;
- Information on supply and demand for logistics products;
- Applicable legislation;
- Rights and obligations of every player in the logistics market, including interested stakeholders and customers;
- International relations, including conducting international economic negotiations to prevent the logistics industry from being hurt by decisions taken at other levels of national government, particularly with regards to issues involving the World Trade Organization and trade agreements. These negotiations often lead to agreements liable to impact directly on logistics operations.

The regulatory authority is meant to ensure the fulfillment of the obligations of government to the society. In ensuring system integrity of the logistics operations, the regulator has the obligation to ensure that corresponding infrastructure and service delivery conditions meet specific service agreements. The regulator ensures compliance with service standards which are meant to protect the physical integrity of items entrusted to the particular logistics operator.

The noticeable trend in many nations is that the logistics operations are either over regulated or the obligation of the regulatory authority to ensure adequate policy in the provision of infrastructure (including technology) for logistics operations is lacking. The logistics services can only be effective with provision of adequate infrastructure which is the exclusive responsibility of the national governments that are represented by various regulatory authorities.

7.2 Research Questions

A critique of the current regulatory policies on logistics operations in African nations is imperative to enhance optimal operational performance of logistics organizations.
If regulation of the logistics sub-sector is imperative, why are some countries not having regulatory authorities?
Human capital development and professionalism are critical to the performance of logistics organizations. To what extent has regulatory authorities gone in formulating effective policies in capacity building?
Funding is a bane in logistics operations. How can regulatory authorities facilitate funding through financial institutions in various countries to promote logistics services, especially as logistics operations have become global phenomenon.
What are the critical elements of effective formulation of legal framework for logistics operations?
What are the imperative elements for the formulation of logistics policy which will be the basis for the formulation of the legal framework?

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TRACK 8: Trends and Challenges in Courier, Logistics and Transport Management

8.1 Introduction

Over the years, courier, logistics and transport management have grown in practice and professionalism. The time sensitivity element of courier has transcended the general delivery of items to intellectual and virtual or technological operations. Logistics has expanded from ordinary movement of goods and services from the manufacturer through warehouses and distributors to the review, development and proffering of solutions to the increasing perennial issues of the concepts of silos, humanitarian, forward and reverse logistics in the contemporary practice of logistics in Nigeria and globally. The transport system has moved from mere movement of trucks to how to keep pace with the modern driving technology and the concepts of ergonomics and psychometric studies that address the position of drivers and their make-ups psychologically and attitudinally. The issue of management is also faced with the current complexity of human nature.

This period of growth from the past years is fraught with challenges. The supply routes and regulatory processes in Africa have been littered with inefficiencies. By estimation, about 120 checkpoints and border posts are active between the exit port from Nigeria to Benin Republic and the entry port from Ghana to Cote d'Ivoire. In the area of transportation, it has been reported that about 23% of the roads in African region are paved, and the cost of moving goods across Africa's major trading corridors is considered as high as 100-300 US$ per ton. Illegal blockades and inadequate infrastructure hinder smooth movement, causing about 25 days delay.

8.2 Research Questions

8.1. What are the trends and challenges of courier operations in Nigeria?

8.2. What are the trends and challenges of logistics operations in Nigeria and Africa?

8.3. What are the trends and challenges of transportation infrastructure in Africa?

8.4. What are the operational solutions to the challenges of courier, logistics and transport entrepreneurship?

8.5. Entrepreneurship interface with government on courier, logistics and transport operations is burdened with bureaucracy and orthodox regulatory policies that are anti-modern business practice. Is review of government policies imperative?

8.6. What is the role of technology in courier, logistics and transport entrepreneurship?

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TRACK 9: Supply Chain Management and Risk Perspective

9.1 Introduction

Logistics and supply chain are major thrusts in Africa's development. The economic future of Africa is being determined by the manner it handles the activities of logistics and supply chain in respect of materials, people, information, finance, technology and infrastructural capability. On one hand, logistics focuses on activities of products from material sourcing to manufacturing, storage or warehousing and distribution. On the other hand, the activities of supply chain cover management of supply, marketing, planning, coordinating, and implementing of control strategies, to ensure that products and services are properly and profitably handled.

Logistics and supply chain activities are under some risks which need to be managed in order to realize effective performance. The risks can be external and internal, but more specifically, include natural disasters, technological performance, unforeseen economic contingencies, hazard of outsourcing and international impact as well as the taste of customers. Logistics and supply chain risk management will require a high level of competence in product analysis, environmental assessment, consumer behavior, economic analysis and forecasting as well as international impact assessment.

9.2 Research Questions

9.1. What is the role of planning, in supply chain management?

9.2. The orthodox supply chain activities have building blocks that hamper effective performance. It is imperative to examine the building blocks?

9.3. Understanding the risks surrounding the activities of logistics and supply chain management will provide the necessary tools to overcoming them. The risks require adequate appraisal in order to proffer solutions accordingly. What are the risks in logistics and supply chain management, and how can they be overcome?

9.4. The volatility of economic uncertainties requires an address of economic indicators that will enhance higher performance of logistics and supply chain functions and activities. Which economic indicators are relevant to the performance of logistics and supply chain functions and activities?

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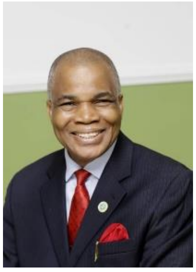

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