THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Investigating the Recognition and Adoption of the Qualifications Framework in the Hong Kong Logistics Industry

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A dissertation submitted to Newcastle Graduate School of Business in partial completion of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Date of submission: November 2011

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This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my dissertation, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this dissertation is the result of original research, the greater part of which was completed subsequent to admission to candidature for the degree except in cases where the Committee has granted approval for credit to be granted from previous candidature at another institution.

Signature: *Lai Woon Kai* Date: 03 November 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation would not have been completed if I had not received support from some concerned parties. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all concerned logistics companies and their staff for their kindness in completing the questionnaires for us. I am most grateful to my Supervisor – Dr. O'Toole for his valuable assistance and his patience in providing guidance. Thanks are also due to those who commented on my work.

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ABSTRACT

The logistics sector of Hong Kong is one of the four strong pillars upon which the Region's income depends. These four economic pillars being of course the logistics industry, the financial services sector, the real estate industry and travel and tourism. The administration of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region introduced a Training Qualifications Framework to the sector in 2008 to initiate skill building tasks so as to enhance the sector's level of international competitiveness. The framework comprises seven levels, with each one enriching the candidate with a new skill. However, there seems little empirical research examining stakeholder perceptions of how far the programme has benefited the logistics workers in Hong Kong and the sector itself.

The purpose of this study is to identify methods to facilitate the adoption of the Qualifications Framework in Hong Kong's logistics industry by examining the perceptions of the Qualifications Framework of the industry's primary stakeholders which are its employees and firms. The logistics industry is made up of a variety of different modalities: sea freight, airfreight, land transportation, international courier, IT, and the value-added services of third / fourth party logistics. Surveys comprising 27 Likert scale items and associated free-response questions were distributed to 212 logistics workers and managers, randomly chosen from 35 logistics sector companies which responded from the 200 chosen as a representative sample of the 2000 companies comprising the sector. ANOVA techniques were used to compare measures of central tendency in distributions of participant response. Levene's test of homogeneity was used to test for the population significance of the sample output estimate.

The results of the investigation indicate that both employees and employers recognised the importance and advantages of the Qualifications Framework in the local logistics sector within the Hong Kong market. While employees identified the exact aspects through which they might build up their competency levels and help them to improve their employment positions over time, employers identified desirable professional features in new recruits and recognised the usefulness of the Qualifications Framework in identifying them. Ultimately, this could enhance the competitiveness of the Hong Kong logistics industry within the Pearl River Delta Region.