

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business (MIB) Program
Student:	Belyakov, Sergey
Title of thesis:	The influence of national values and the business environment on managerial discretion in Russian companies in comparison with Germany, Japan and USA

Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis. Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis' topic, aim and objectives.

Based on the review of the strategic leadership literature, the author provides a clear justification for the choice of research topic. He highlights the pivotal role of managerial discretion, the degree of which is thought to differ in Russia compared to other countries. The author does not use the term "aim", but the purpose of the study is stated on page 18. The goals are aligned with this purpose.

Structure and logic of the text flow. Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.

Generally speaking, the structure of the work is clear. It contains the standard Master thesis chapters, which are logically connected. In most instances, the transitions between the chapters are smooth. Based on the literature review, the author develops a theoretical model and derives hypotheses. The results of the statistical analysis performed to test the hypotheses are described in the empirical part. The author reviews the literature on national values and formal institutions in the second chapter ("Theory development and hypotheses"). However, those parts that are not directly relevant for the development of hypotheses should be moved to the literature review chapter. The author needs to distinguish clearly between the presentation and discussion of findings. In the methods chapter, subheading 3.5 is labeled "Results". Moreover, in the discussion chapter, the first subheading (4.1) is labeled "Findings". Instead, the author should include two chapters labeled "Results" and "Discussion" respectively.

Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives. Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.

The author presents a comprehensive review of the relevant research literature on strategic leadership, describing the development of the field, dissecting different research streams, stressing the pivotal role of managerial discretion and identifying some limitations (such as with respect to "Upper Echelons Theory", see p. 8). He also discusses the variance-decomposition literature related to corporate performance. The results of various empirical studies are discussed. Based on the literature review, a theoretical model is proposed (see Figure 1 on p. 20). The hypotheses are firmly grounded in the literature. Moreover, the author compares the research findings to the hypotheses, taking into account previous studies in other countries. However, the specific contributions of the present study need to be discussed in more detail. The author mentions several limitations and outlines future research needs.

Quality of data gathering and description. Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.

The author describes the specific research design chosen to test the hypotheses, but needs to explain the rationale for the design choices and provide references to the relevant research methods literature. The sampling procedure is discussed in detail. On page 36, the author makes the following assertion: "We can state that the three out of five hypotheses received significant support as a result of this study." However, it is not clear how statistical significance was assessed.

Scientific aspect of the thesis. Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives.

The author demonstrates his ability to synthesize various research streams and choose research methods to test theoretical propositions. The literature review is mainly descriptive, but the critique of some approaches coupled with the development of a theoretical model and attempt to explain the comparatively low degree of managerial discretion in Russian companies provide some evidence of independent scientific thinking.

Overall, the model that the author tests is quite simple; more granular analysis is required to make significant contributions.

Practical/applied nature of research. Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results.

The topic of the study is potentially relevant for executives interested in the Russian market, but the discussion of practical implications in the thesis is too short. More detailed analyses are required to yield findings that are sufficient to develop specific, actionable recommendations.

Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.

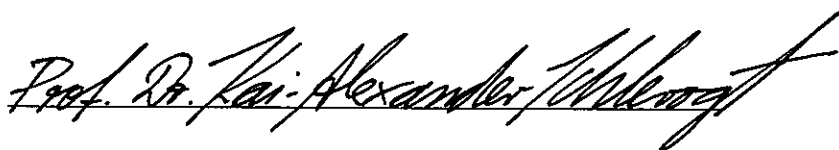
The thesis does not include a statement about the independent character of the Master thesis and an abstract. Overall, the thesis layout (headings, sub-headings, etc.) is clear, but the author needs to pay more attention to due diligence (elimination of typographical errors, etc.).

Conclusion:

The Master thesis of Sergey Belyakov meets the requirements of the Master in International Business (MIB) program. Thus, the author of the thesis can be awarded the desired degree.

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Scientific Advisor:



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