

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master in Management (MIM)
<b>Student:</b>	Elizaveta Kaledina
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING APPROACH

**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.

The topic of the thesis is critically important in both theoretical and practical senses due to (1) the growing role of sustainable development concept on the macro, meso (industry), micro and individual (incl. customers) levels; (2) the contemporary debate on the sustainable consumer behavior and the related barriers.

That is why, the topic is in line with the actual theoretical discourse. The main problem of the research is connected to the gap between consumers' thinking (possible — a "sustainable" thinking) and their actual actions (p. 6). Thus, the very purpose of the thesis ("to identify barriers that inhibit sustainable consumer behavior through material representation of individuals' conscious thinking and reconstruction of their decisional premises and actions", p. 6) is presented quite clear. The thesis' topic, purpose and objectives are strongly interconnected.

**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.

The research is conducted in a quite logical manner. The findings and conclusions are directly followed from the study. The theoretical and empirical parts of the thesis are connected justifiably and in good balance.

**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 coverage of objectives (presented in in a stepwise manner, p. 6) is quite adequate. The research framework is organized around the creation of different but typical "buyer personas" and developing the particular customer journey maps. The research question is formulated clearly ("What are the barriers that impede sustainable consumer behavior?", p.6). The main trends in modern literature on sustainable (green) customer behaviour are carefully analysed and applied to research.

**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 research tools and methods are selected properly. The very research is based on the introspective qualitative approach (the thorough examination of individual's conscious thoughts). The qualitative method of in-depth semi structured interview is used for building an effective customer-journey map (as a tool to systematize the data obtained). Additionally, the point-of-sakes observations and consecutive immediate interviews were used to explore consumers behavior more precisely. The list of references is quite relevant and complete.

**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 way of scientific thinking is independent. The proposed methodology looks quite understandable. The entire research is made on the mainstream level, but the author demonstrates the developed research skills in solving problems. By applying customer journey mapping approach, the author correctly reveals the

list of 13 barriers that impede or complicate the process of sustainable consumer behavior.
<b>Practical/applied nature of research.</b> 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 theoretical background is directly related to the international business practices. The results are just and can be shared for theoretical as well as practical purposes. From an academic perspective, the thesis brings new understanding of sustainable consumer behavior barriers identification and valuation. Practically, the thesis presents the policy recommendations as well as the marketing implications that could be implemented into the managerial practice in Russia and internationally.
<b>Quality of thesis layout.</b> Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.
The main Regulations for the master thesis preparation are fulfilled. The tables, figures, and references in general are presented correctly.
<b>Originality of the text.</b> All sources of match identified by the Safe Assign system follow the allowed cases, the paper does not contain any elements of plagiarism.
The thesis text is original (98,2%) and does not contain elements of plagiarism.

The Master thesis of Elizaveta Kaledina meets the requirements for master thesis of MIM program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

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Scientific Advisor: Yury Blagov

