

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master in Management (MIM)
<b>Student:</b>	Anna Sidorenko
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	The Role of UN SDGs in Business Sustainability Transformation: the Case of Food Retail Companies

<p><b>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</b> 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.</p> <p>The topic of the thesis is in line with the current theoretical debate on the business/corporate sustainability transformation in general and in different industries under the influence of SDGs implementation. The goal of the research ("to identify the role of the UN SDGs in the BST transformation for food retail companies", p.13) is defined accurately and is aligned with the topic and the objectives.</p>
<p><b>Structure and logic of the text flow.</b> Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.</p> <p>In general, the research is conducted in a logic manner. The theoretical and empirical parts (literature review, research design, and empirical study as such) are well interconnected.</p>
<p><b>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</b> 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.</p> <p>The author demonstrated the ability to formulate and convey the research problem. The research question ("How did the practices of doing business in the food retail industry change following the escalation of global challenges addressed by the SDGs concept?") is conceptually correct and connected with the actual trends in the theoretical debate. The main theoretical approach of the thesis is based on the business/corporate sustainability model transformation by Dyllick and Muff and correctly applied to the food retail industry. The systemic analysis of related changes in governance, processes and products is detailed and reasonable.</p>
<p><b>Quality of data gathering and description.</b> 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.</p> <p>The author conducted an exploratory research. It looks quite rational and adequate due to the very nature of the new and just developed issue of business/corporate sustainability model transformation towards quite controversial but necessary BST3.0 model. The qualitative data are mainly collected from non-financial reports of leading food-retail companies (2015-2019). The period is justified by the introducing and implementation of UN SDGs. The analysis of global industry leaders by retail revenue is rational and adequate and the sample is justified. The list of references is not long (64 positions totally) but very focused. The most important and relevant sources are presented.</p>
<p><b>Scientific aspect of the thesis.</b> 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.</p> <p>The author used traditional and conventional approaches to research in the field of business/corporate sustainability. New original methodology was not presented.</p>
<p><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.</p> <p>The theoretical background of the thesis is related to the international managerial practices. The author presented a four group patterns framework (p. 33) that can be applied to any food-retail company, which</p>

is going to transform their model of business/corporate sustainability in current period. The set of recommendations on changes in governance, processes and products for the food retail companies (p. 42) according to their sustainability practices development level is correct and can be implemented in Russia and internationally.

**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 in general fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation. The tables, figures and references are correct.

**Originality of the text.** 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 is original (the originality level is 93,6%) and does not contain any elements of plagiarism.

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

Date: June 14, 2020

Scientific Advisor: Yury Blagov

