**SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR’S REFERENCE**

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| **Program:** | **Master in International Business Program** |
| **Student:** | **Nazarenko Ekaterina Andreevna** |
| **Title of thesis:** | **«The impact of retailer’s CSR activities on the formation of loyalty to organic products under the private label»** |

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| **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. |
| Topicality of the research is correctly formulated by the author in the introduction to the research. The topic is actual. The *main goal* of the thesis is to find out whether there is connection between CSR activities and consumer loyalty to organic products under private label. The thesis discusses conceptual issues related to expanding the role of branding as a mediator of corporate social responsibility (CSR) of a retail chain, taking into account the achievement of sustainable development goals and while maintaining the commercial interests of the chain. Achieving such a compromise is possible when building long-term relations between the retail chain and consumers, based (taking into account the brand dualism) both on the chain's CSR events and on the creation of a predominantly range of organic products under its private labels. |
| **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 theoretical and practical material that is presented in the work is *well-structured and well-aligned*; the logic of material representation is kept and it is consistent with the stated content. The thesis consists of three chapters. In the first chapter of this study, there was provided theoretical and practical background of the topic. In the second chapter there was shown explanation of the chosen model and methods of the research as well as the main findings from qualitative and quantitative methods. Finally, the last chapter covered some managerial implications of the chosen model and consumer segments of the organic food. |
| **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 objectives stated in the paper are fully covered by the represented analysis. The author formulates the research problem (the research gap) based on the analysis of an extensive list of inter-disciplinary sources, mostly modern, and offers a distinct solution for the stated problem. |
| **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 bibliography list (85 literature items) presents an inter-disciplinary choice of relevant and reliable sources which guarantee a comprehensive study of the current phenomenon. It includes both foreign and Russian sources of different years of publication. Most of them are modern which gives more actuality and truth to the research. |
| **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. |
| Scientific aspect of the thesis is represented by thorough analysis and interpretation of great number of up-to-date theoretical sources and secondary data on the deep understanding of the topic and integrated approach to the analysis of the problems are demonstrated. The individual approach is shown by the author’s ability to clearly formulate and justify one’s own point of view and scientific thinking applied to solving research problems. |
| **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. |
| A study represented in the thesis definitely has a practical component. Based on the studies model, clear recommendations were developed for the retailers that sell or have a desire to sell organic private labels. The first section of recommendations was devoted to the importance of introduction of the CSR activities (social and environmental) in order to gain consumer’s trust and loyalty. Besides, the retailers need to inform customers about these activities via different channels (social media, official website, mobile application and the store). In order to build trust, consumers need to be involved into the interactions with mobile application to be willing to pay more for the products and be ready to share positive experience with people they close to. |
| **Quality of thesis layout.** Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references. |
| As for the bibliography list, it looks representative as it includes various sources of publications. The articles and monographs were picked up in accordance with the topic and helped the author to make an theoretical overview of the current problem. However, it should be noted that the design of the thesis reviewer makes certain claims. For example, some figures are signed as tables. |
| **Originality of the text.**  The thesis text is original and *does not contain elements of plagiarism* |

**Additional comments:**

1). Nazarenko E.А. is a co-author (Cherenkov V.I., Starov S.A., Gladkikh I.V., Kirukov S.I.) of the article ***«****The transformation of a retail chain's private label of eco-products into a sustainability brand – the way to responsible consumption»*, which is accepted for publication and will be published in the journal «Marketing and Marketing Research» (№3, 2021).

2). Nazarenko E.А. successfully delivered a scientific report «*The study of the impact of associations with the retailer's CSR on the trust and loyalty of consumers to the private labels of organic products»* at the scientific seminar, which was held on May 15, 2021 at the GSOM.

The Master thesis of **Nazarenko Ekaterina Adreevna** *«The impact of retailer’s CSR activities on the formation of loyalty to organic products under the private label»*  **meets** **the requirements** for master thesis of MIM program, thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

15/06/2021

Scientific Advisor

Professor

Starov S.A.

