SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	**Master in Management**
Student:	**Nikita Shafinskiy**
Title of thesis:	**Digital transformation in small and medium enterprises: Russian regional B2B retailer case**

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.

Digital transformation has become an increasingly important topic among enterprises and in research. One important issue is how firms should go about to make investments in appropriate digital technology – and the appropriate changes to organizational processes and business models. This is particularly challenging for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Considering all above, the master thesis of Nikita Shafinskiy seems to be surely topical. The title, research problem and research questions are clearly specified. The goal is real, accurately expressed and the tasks are defined in a good form.

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 thesis is organized in a logical way. The structure of the research is divided into three main parts. In the first chapter the theoretical framework for digital transformation is analyzed through the literature review and terminology investigation. The main research gap is formulated. In chapter two author develops the case study of digital transformation in a Russian regional B2B retailer. In chapter three Nikita investigates the successes and failures during a digital transformation. In conclusion Nikita summarizes the paper's results. Both theoretical and empirical part of the thesis are consequently aligned in terms of their structure.

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.

Author demonstrates ability to formulate and convey the research problem and to offer options for its solution applying the latest trends in relevant 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.

For this case study, there were several data collection methods used. For the basis of the data collection procedure a semi-structured interview method was used to understand the digital transformation story in the company, as well as other topics like the general overview of the company, its operations, and customers. During the conduction of studies that have an exploratory data collection method using interviews is considered as one of the more rational research tactics. Quality of selecting research tools and methods is good. Author demonstrates adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods. The data samples are described and analysed. The list of reference is complete and relevant.

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 dataset used in this thesis was gathered via deep interviews with case companies' representatives.
The business model canvas and value proposition canvas frameworks approach facilitated the qualitative analysis of company digital transformation development. Quality of selecting research tools and methods is good. Author demonstrates adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods.

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 practical contribution of the thesis is the study of digital transformation of Russian firms on a concrete SME retail example. This study provides a practical example on a case of a real company that had undergone a digital transformation for further research purposes, since there are many more industries in which digital transformation in SMEs can happen. The research also contributes to the usage of the business model canvas framework, which can be used for understanding out of which elements the business is made up of, and later to evaluate these elements and to innovate on them.

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

Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence. All the tables and figures are properly edited and represented.
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.
All sources of match identified by the Safe Assign system follow the allowed cases, the paper does not contain any elements of plagiarism.

The Master thesis of **Nikita Shafinskiy** meets the requirements for master thesis of MIM program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date: 14.06.2021

Scientific Advisor:

Assoc. Professor Sergey Yablonsky