**SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR’S REFERENCE**

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| **Program:** | Master in Urban Management and Development |
| **Student:** | Tsvetkova Tatiana Dmitrievna |
| **Title of thesis:** | Smart learning approach in higher education: The case of St. Petersburg |

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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. |
| The master’s thesis of Tatiana Tsvetkova focuses on improvement of smart education environment through increasing effectiveness of information transmission. The particular attention is paid to extracurricular activities. This is an interesting and insufficiently studied problem. Thus, the goal set by the author is rather new and ambitious. There is no research revealing such experience in Saint Petersburg higher education. The research problem, the goal and objectives of the research are properly defined and aligned.  |
| **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 well-structured with the clear logic of research. The author starts with the literature review where presents major conceptual approaches to smart learning and self-learning analyzing their definitions and attributes. The second chapter reveals research methodology and presents research findings. The empirical part is based on students’ survey, semi-structured interviews with representatives of higher educational institutions, St. Petersburg administration in the field of higher education, organizers of extracurricular activities and Director of the Coordination Center for International Scientific, Technical and Educational Programs. |
| **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 master’s thesis is properly contextualized within current literature in the field. During the research process the author proved the ability to formulate the clear research problem based on the well-organized critical literature review. Objectives set by the author are relevant to the title and the goal of the research. Chosen research approach ensured achieving the research objectives and deriving the valuable solutions. |
| **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 main outcomes derived from the interview with stakeholders make the validity of results and recommendations much higher. A designed questionnaire and interview guidelines in general meet research objectives. The list of references includes 76 items. |
| **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 the independent thinking in solving the set problem. The existing theories and practice of smart learning are examined thoroughly. On this base the author manages to formulate original research question and develop the appropriate research methodology. The research methods used are relevant for set research goal and objectives. |
| **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 methods of communicating information on the selected topic (extracurricular activities) were identified and clarified. The main conclusions were drawn that the methods used to convey the messages are complex, outdated and expensive.From a practical point of view, the results of the research and recommendations could be very useful. The author’s idea to create a platform that hosts information about extracurricular activities was supported by stakeholders. |
| **Quality of thesis layout.** Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references. |
| In general layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense.  |
| **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 text is original and does not contain elements of plagiarism. |

The Master thesis of Tatiana D. Tsvetkova meets the requirements for master thesis of MUMD program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date: 09.06.2021

Scientific Advisor:

Associate Professor, Natalia P. Drozdova