

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master in Management (MIM)
<b>Student:</b>	Maria Aleksandrova
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	LOCALIZATION AND ADOPTATION OF B2B/B2C BUSINESS MODEL IN RUSSIA: CASE STUDY OF ALIBABA GROUP HOLDING LIMITED

### **Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.**

In this paper, author reports on born global (BGs)/born digital (BDs) firms, those that conduct international digital business at or near their founding. Despite the limited resources that usually characterize new businesses, BGs/BDs achieve international online sales from an early stage in their development. They tend to internationalize faster than described by traditional perspectives which have observed that internationalizing firms often operate in domestic markets before venturing overseas. BGs/BDs are emerging in sizable numbers worldwide. By 2016 numerous BGs/BDs retail platform network companies operated in different countries across the world: Amazon, Alibaba, Russian Ozon.ru. Alibaba Group Holding Limited is one of the most successful retail digital platform business. Taking into account all above, the master thesis of Maria Aleksandrova appears to be really topical. The title, research problem and research questions are clearly stated. The goal is actual and the tasks are well defined.

### **Structure and logic of the text flow.**

The thesis is structured in a logical way. The structure of the research is divided into several parts. In introductory Chapter 1 Maria formulates research questions and objectives. The goal of this paper is to fill the research gap by an in depth case study of localization and adaptation of Alibaba Group Holding Limited business model components (AliExpress platform – B2B/B2C) in Russian market. The Chapter 2 takes aim to study theoretical background of BGs/BDs internationalisation, digital multi sided platform organisation, platform business model and its adoption, and formulates the thesis's research framework. The Chapter 3 is related with empirical study: localization of B2B/B2C retail platform business model components - China/Russia Alibaba case. Author justifies the case study methodology, describes data collection process and overviews Alibaba domestic business models and strategy of international expansion in Russia. It goes on with results and conclusions plus appendixes. 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.**

The qualitative research approach is chosen to answer the research question of the paper. As for the research strategy the single case study with embedded units was chosen. The case of Alibaba Group Holding Limited is analyzed in terms of platform business model research agenda. First Maria identifies and describes initial business model and value proposition components in China. After she identifies, describes and compares adaptation (or lack of adaptation) of each component of business model in Russian market. 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 is high. Author demonstrates adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods. The data samples are well described and analysed. The list of Reference is complete and relevant.

### **Scientific aspect of the thesis.**

The aim of the present master's thesis was to explore the drivers of internationalization as well peculiarities and patterns of international expansion of retail digital platforms. The study contributes to the theory of Born Global and Born Digital platforms as well as sheds light on the internationalization process of platform business models. The aim was achieved by investigating the existing literature on the topic of platform industry development as well as on the phenomenon of Born Global and Born Digital platform companies and by applying the theoretical frameworks to the case of Alibaba Group Holding Limited. Author established a good example of independent scientific thinking in solving the set of stated problems/objectives of research by conducting the study and interpreting the results. Research methods are

well justified and research results are related with the aim/objectives of the study.
<b>Practical/applied nature of research.</b>
The study develops applied recommendations about retail platforms internationalisation strategy. The managerial implications of the following study are aimed at the following groups of managers: 1) management of internalizing retail platforms; 2) management of retail platform that is going to internalize; 3) management of the domestic retail platform that competes with international one.
<b>Quality of thesis layout.</b>
Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence. All the tables and figures are properly edited.
<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 and does not contain elements of plagiarism

The Master thesis of Maria Aleksandrova meets the requirements for master thesis of Master in Management (MIM) program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

01.06.2017

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Asc. Professor S.A.Yablonsky

