

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master of International Business (MIB)
Student:	Anton Murov
Title of thesis:	Attitudes of knowledge workers and their employers towards distant work: the comparison of Russian and international experience

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.

Contemporary literature suggests that managing knowledge workers is particularly challenging due to specifics of knowledge work, though the practical question of what are the best ways to manage knowledge workers still does not have clear and comprehensive answer. At the same time, similar concerns (though for different reasons) are raised about managing distant work - rapid development of technologies provide more opportunities to use it, however, many organizations are reluctant to do so. What happens when these two issues, both challenging from managerial perspective, are coupled – when knowledge work is performed in distant mode? What are advantages and disadvantages of distant arrangements for knowledge work, and thus, how to manage it better? These questions have been barely addressed in the existing literature and lack empirical evidence in general, and from Russia in particular. Taking this into account, the master thesis of Anton Murov, aimed to study attitudes of employees and employers towards distant knowledge work, appears to be extremely topical.

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.

After the introduction and research questions, the thesis continues with the literature review (Chapter 3) that introduces key concepts of Anton's thesis, analyses existing studies in the field and concludes with identified gaps in the literature. Chapter 4 explains the research methodology. Empirical findings are described in detail in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 concludes with discussion of findings and directions for further research. List of references and appendices with details of data analysis complete the thesis. The text presents clear and logical flow of thought. Theoretical and empirical parts are closely interrelated and well-balanced.

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 review of the existing literature adequately covers all of the key concepts addressed in the thesis, including the most recent theory developments. The author of the thesis demonstrates critical analytical thinking, being able to contrast and analyse critically various approaches and formulate his own position. The analysis of the empirical data is also done in a comprehensive manner.

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 selection of methods for empirical research is quite clearly argued in the chapter 4. Some critical remarks can be raised regarding the research instrument (questionnaire) and data collection procedure, however, they appear to be minor in the light of independent work of the author and difficulties of empirical data collection in Russia. The list of references is comprehensive and covers most recent international literature in the field.

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.

Anton has demonstrated himself as a researcher with critical and independent scientific thinking, ready to face the difficulties of empirically studying vaguely defined phenomena. Analysis of the literature,

selection of the research model, choice of research methodology that would fit his research goals and development of research instrument all were been done by Anton himself. The author's "own voice" can be clearly "heard" through the thesis.

Evaluating the thesis, the final *outcome* (the text) is taken into account, yet I would like to highlight that in this particular case I have witnessed serious *process* of learning-by-doing that has to be appreciated. From the regular discussions with the author, I can judge that Anton took the very process of doing empirical research as a learning experience, he was able to identify "lessons learned" and reflect on them.

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 thesis is of practical value for the managers and organizations willing to apply distant arrangements to knowledge work. The author provides detailed discussion of business implications of his findings in Chapter 5.

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 has proper layout through the text.

To summarize, the Master thesis of Anton Murov meets the requirements for master thesis of Master of International Business (MIB) program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

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Scientific advisor:

Tatiana E.Andreeva, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor,

Department of Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management

Graduate School of Management,

St.Petersburg State University

