

## REVIEW

of the opponent of Yatsenko Olha, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, Acting Head of the International Trade and Marketing Department of the Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, Kyiv

for the qualification work of **Ye Jianfu** on the topic:

«Management of China's Post Pandemic Sustainable Business Model»,  
submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty

073 – Management

**Relevance of the topic of the qualification work.** Sustainable business models, once a peripheral concept in strategic management, have now become central to enterprise resilience and long-term competitiveness, especially in the context of post-pandemic recovery. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of traditional linear growth models and accelerated the shift toward sustainability-oriented strategies. Ye Jianfu's dissertation, "Management of China's Post-Pandemic Sustainable Business Models", addresses this urgent global issue by offering a comprehensive framework for understanding and managing sustainable business transformations in a complex, cross-cultural, and post-crisis environment. The study is particularly relevant as it integrates benchmarking management, circular economy principles, and digital transformation into a unified model tailored to China's unique institutional and economic context. The dissertation also contributes to the international discourse on inclusive growth and green development, offering practical insights for enterprises participating in global value chains and the Belt and Road Initiative (P. 5–34).

The dissertation is embedded within several strategic research frameworks, including the international project "European Inclusive Circular Economy: Post-War and Post-Pandemic Module for Ukraine" (Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module, Registration No. 101085640), and the national research project "Enterprise Sustainable Business Model Transformation in Global Value Chain Restructuring" (Registration No. 2023-INT-089). These affiliations underscore the study's alignment with contemporary global challenges and its contribution to both academic and policy-oriented dialogues.

## **The degree of validity and reliability of scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations**

The scientific propositions, conclusions, and recommendations presented in the dissertation are methodologically robust and empirically grounded. The study effectively combines theoretical frameworks from stakeholder theory, circular economy, ecological economics, and complex systems theory. It employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative data analysis (e.g., principal component analysis, AHP, structural equation modeling) with qualitative case studies and expert consultations. The author uses internationally recognized datasets (World Bank, UNDP, China's National Bureau of Statistics) and conducts field research on Belt and Road projects, enhancing the credibility and generalizability of the findings (P. 35–70).

The dissertation introduces a multi-dimensional evaluation system comprising 42 indicators across five dimensions: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, social sustainability, innovation drive, and Belt and Road special indicators. These indicators are normalized and weighted using a hierarchical-entropy method, ensuring objectivity and adaptability. The empirical validation through the China-Laos Railway case study further strengthens the reliability of the proposed model, demonstrating its applicability in real-world transnational infrastructure projects (P. 87–113).

## **Content and structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation is logically structured and thematically coherent. It consists of an introduction, three main chapters, a conclusion, references, and appendices. Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical and methodological foundations of sustainable business model management. Chapter 2 presents the evaluation system and empirical analysis of China's post-pandemic sustainable business models, including regional and sectoral assessments. Chapter 3 focuses on the Belt and Road Initiative, identifying implementation challenges and proposing a new benchmarking model. The structure facilitates a progressive understanding of the topic, from theory to practice, and from domestic to international applications.

The author develops a three-dimensional spatial model to visualize the evolution of sustainable business models, using economic, environmental, and social indicators as axes. This model effectively captures the dynamic nature of sustainability transitions and allows for comparative analysis across regions and industries. The trajectory analysis reveals that while eastern coastal provinces in China lead in sustainable development, central and western regions are catching up through targeted policy interventions and green investments (P. 114–135).

The dissertation also provides a detailed case study of the China-Laos Railway, illustrating how sustainable business models can be operationalized in cross-border infrastructure projects. The case demonstrates significant improvements across all five evaluation dimensions, with the composite score rising from 0.41 in 2021 to 0.89 in 2024, reflecting a successful transition from exploratory to mature sustainability practices (P. 136–150).

#### **Scientific novelty of the results of the dissertation work**

The dissertation makes several original contributions to the field of sustainable business model management:

- For the first time, a comprehensive evaluation system is developed that integrates post-pandemic resilience, digital transformation, and cross-cultural adaptability into sustainable business model assessment, specifically tailored to Chinese enterprises and Belt and Road contexts.
- A three-dimensional spatial model is constructed to visualize and analyze the evolutionary paths of sustainable business models, enabling dynamic tracking and benchmarking across regions and industries.
- A “Three-Phase Dynamic Benchmarking Model” (diagnosis–adaptation–innovation) is proposed, offering a replicable framework for enterprises to optimize their sustainability strategies through international best practices and local adaptation.
- The study enriches stakeholder collaboration theory by introducing a cross-cultural value co-creation mechanism, enhancing the stability and inclusiveness of sustainable business models in transnational projects.

- The dissertation advances the theory of circular economy integration by linking it with digital technologies and inclusive growth strategies, providing a trinity model of “digital empowerment–green development–inclusive growth” (P. 151–175).

### **Theoretical and practical significance of the results obtained**

The dissertation significantly expands the theoretical foundation of sustainable business model management by integrating multi-disciplinary perspectives and developing context-specific evaluation tools. It enhances the understanding of how enterprises can balance economic, environmental, and social objectives in a post-crisis, cross-border environment. The study also contributes to the benchmarking literature by introducing a dynamic, culturally sensitive adaptation framework that goes beyond static performance comparisons.

Practically, the dissertation offers actionable insights for enterprises, policymakers, and international cooperation agencies. It provides a toolkit for diagnosing sustainability gaps, designing targeted interventions, and monitoring progress over time. The Belt and Road case studies offer replicable models for infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing projects seeking to align with SDGs and ESG standards. The study also informs government policies on green finance, industrial upgrading, and regional development (P. 176–190).

### **Completeness of reflection of the main provisions of the dissertation in the works published by the author**

The core findings of the dissertation have been disseminated through 8 peer-reviewed publications, including 5 articles in Ukrainian scientific journals indexed in international databases and 3 conference proceedings. These publications cover key aspects of the dissertation, such as the evaluation system, Belt and Road investment strategies, and digital-green integration models. The author has also presented the research at multiple international conferences, ensuring academic visibility and scholarly engagement.

The dissertation is an independent scientific work. All results and analyses are original and conducted by the author. Where co-authored publications are referenced, the author's contribution is clearly stated. The author has also presented the

only the contributions directly attributable to the applicant have been included, in line with academic integrity standards.

### **Assessment of dissertation structure, language and style of presentation**

The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of references.

The dissertation is written in business English with a scientific style of presenting its content, is characterized by integrity, semantic completeness, logical sequence of the issues considered, accuracy of the use of special terminology, clarity, clarity and objectivity of presentation of research materials.

### **Absence (presence) of violation of academic integrity**

The text of the dissertation has been checked for the presence of textual borrowings by Turnitin Similarity. According to the results of the inspection, the absence of textual borrowings without proper reference to the source was found and it was found that Ye Jianfu dissertation on the topic: "Management of China's Post Pandemic Sustainable Business Model" corresponds to the principles of academic integrity.

### **Remarks on the work and its debatable provisions**

The following should be attributed to the shortcomings and remarks of a debatable nature:

While the dissertation is comprehensive and methodologically sound, a few areas warrant further clarification:

1. Indicator Selection and Weighting: How does the author ensure that the 42 indicators are both exhaustive and mutually exclusive and what measures were taken to avoid over-representation of certain dimensions (e.g., economic vs. social). (P. 55–70)
2. Causality vs. Correlation: While the study identifies strong correlations (e.g., between environmental compliance and ROI), how does it address potential endogeneity or reverse causality in cross-border investment contexts. (P. 90–95)
3. Cultural Generalizability: The model is tested primarily in Southeast Asia and Central/Eastern Europe. How can it be adapted for regions with significantly

different institutional or cultural contexts, such as Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America. (P. 160–170)

4. Scalability of the Benchmarking Model: While the Three-Phase Model shows promising results in pilot projects, what are the main barriers to scaling it across SMEs or non-infrastructure sectors. (P. 171–180)

5. Policy Implementation Risks: The recommendations assume a supportive policy environment. How might the model perform under geopolitical tensions, protectionist policies, or regulatory instability? (P. 181–190)

It should be noted that these remarks are of a clarifying nature and do not underestimate the positive assessment of Ye Jianfu's dissertation.

### **General conclusion and assessment of the qualification work**

Ye Jianfu's dissertation entitled “Management of China's Post-Pandemic Sustainable Business Models” represents a scholarly work of exceptional merit that stands as an independent, timely, and academically rigorous contribution to contemporary management science. The dissertation skillfully addresses a critical global challenge at the intersection of pandemic recovery, sustainability transformation, and international business development. Through meticulous research methodology and innovative analytical frameworks, it delivers significant theoretical and practical contributions that advance our understanding across multiple fields, including sustainable development, international business strategy, and strategic management practices in cross-cultural contexts. The study distinguishes itself through its methodologically sound approach, empirically rich dataset spanning multiple years and regions, and policy-relevant insights that bridge theoretical concepts with real-world applications. The research not only meets but exceeds the highest standards expected of doctoral research, providing practitioners and scholars with a replicable, scalable, and adaptable framework for effectively managing sustainable business transformations in increasingly complex, dynamic, and cross-border operational environments.

When evaluated across the essential dimensions of academic excellence—including scientific depth, methodological rigor, practical relevance, structural clarity,

conceptual innovation, and original contribution to knowledge—the dissertation comprehensively satisfies and surpasses the established requirements for the conferral of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of knowledge 07 – Management and Administration, specialty 073 – Management. The work stands as a testament to the candidate's scholarly capability and potential for future contributions to the discipline.

In conclusion, the dissertation "Management of China's Post-Pandemic Sustainable Business Model" meets the requirements for awarding the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of knowledge 07 - Management and Administration, and its author Ye Jianfu deserves to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 073 - Management.

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| ЗАСВІДЧУЮ                                                                                           |                  |
| Начальник відділу кадрів<br>Київський національний економічний<br>університет імені Вадима Гетьмана |                  |
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