

MASTER'S THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Student's name: **Bereket Getachew Tessema**

Master's Thesis Reviewer (MT): **Muhammad Shoaib. Ph. D**

MT topic: **The role of sustainable business model innovation (SBMI) towards sustainable performance of SMEs**

Acad. year: 2024/2025

Notes on completing the report:

1. *A - fulfilled very well with no remarks, B - fulfilled very well with minor remarks, C - fulfilled at an average level, D - fulfilled with deficiencies, E - fulfilled but with significant deficiencies, F - not fulfilled.*
2. *If any criterion is graded F, the thesis must be evaluated as unsatisfactory overall, not meeting the criteria for the MT defence, and such a thesis cannot be recommended for the defence.*
3. *MT Reviewer must comment verbally on each evaluation criterion!*

Assessment criteria:

Assessment

1. Thesis Objectives and Methods	B
The thesis clearly outlines its objectives, focusing on how Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SBMI) influences the sustainable performance of Ethiopian manufacturing SMEs. It uses a quantitative method (PLS-SEM) to analyze SBMI's financial, social, and environmental impact. Strengths include reliable measures and strong statistical validation. However, the target population lacks clarity. Overall, the thesis is coherent and methodologically sound, offering valuable insights in an underexplored context.	
2. Theoretical Background	C
The theoretical background of the thesis demonstrates a broad and well-structured review of literature related to Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SBMI) and sustainable performance, with appropriate references to both domestic and foreign sources. Key concepts such as the Triple Bottom Line, SBMI dimensions (SVP, SVC, SRC), and sustainability indicators are thoroughly explained and supported with recent academic literature, indicating the author's awareness of current trends and discussions in the field. However, a major limitation lies in the lack of an explicit theoretical framework. The thesis does not ground the relationship between SBMI and sustainable performance in any established theory. This omission weakens the conceptual justification for the selected variables and their hypothesized relationships.	
3. Practical Application – Analysis	B
The thesis effectively utilizes PLS-SEM to examine Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SBMI), applying well-established constructs with validated measurement scales. While the methodology and data collection via self-administered surveys appear sound, a major limitation lies in the lack of clarity about the target population. Though 170 questionnaires were distributed and 157 responses received from manufacturing SMEs in Ethiopia, the thesis does not justify whether this sample size adequately supports the research objectives or how it reflects the larger population. Nevertheless, the analysis is robust, with strong reliability, validity, and hypothesis testing.	

4. Practical Application – Project/ Research	C
The thesis effectively integrates the theoretical framework of Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SVP, SVC, SRC) with sustainable performance dimensions through empirical analysis using PLS-SEM, offering well supported and clearly interpreted findings. The discussion and recommendations mostly reflect a solid grasp of the subject. However, the discussion on hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 (p. 54) lacks clarity, omits environmental performance, and repeats social performance. The recommendations (p. 55), particularly the first one, are not entirely convincing—claims like women’s greater commitment to sustainability lack references. Despite this, the thesis achieves its objectives, notably in validating the SBMI scale within Ethiopian SMEs.	
5. Formal Layout	C
The thesis presents a logical structure with a clear flow from introduction to conclusion, and the headings guide the reader effectively. However, there are notable issues affecting its academic quality. The repeated use of the term “paper” instead of “thesis” on pages 14, 15, and 57 shows inconsistency in terminology. Line spacing and paragraph alignment do not conform to the required formatting throughout the thesis. Additionally, some tables are incorrectly cited for instance, Table 5.8 is referenced on page 50, but the explanation pertains to Table 5.7. Several tables also lack source citations, reducing credibility. While the bibliography is comprehensive, listing 62 references, it suffers from inconsistencies in citation style, such as irregular author listings, journal names, and punctuation.	

Overall thesis assessment*	C
This thesis explores the timely topic of Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SBMI) and its impact on SME sustainability in Ethiopia. While the objectives are clear and the methodology well applied, the lack of a theoretical framework (established theory) and undefined study population limits its depth. The discussion around key hypotheses is unclear, with missing environmental performance and repeated social performance content. Recommendations lack clarity and references, and inconsistencies in terminology, citations, and language affect the formal quality. Still, the study offers valuable insights and, with better theoretical grounding and writing, could significantly enhance scholarly value.	

* The final grade is not an arithmetic average of the individual criteria for assessing the thesis.

Questions for the defence:

1. Your thesis doesn't clearly outline a theoretical framework. If you had the chance to revise it, which specific theory would you choose to explain the link between Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SBMI) and sustainable performance?
2. Your methodology section doesn't clearly describe the study population. Could you explain how your sampling approach ensures that your findings are both representative and generalizable to the broader population?

The thesis **fulfils** the criteria for the defence of the MT. The thesis **is recommended** for the defence.