

## REFeree'S REVIEW

<b>Program:</b>	Master in International Business
<b>Student:</b>	Yulia A. Sinitskaya
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Culture-based approach to understanding consumer behavior: comparison of Russian and Chinese consumers

<b>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>	4	3	2
<b>Structure and logic of the text flow.</b> Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.	<b>5</b>	4	3	2
<b>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>	4	3	2
<b>Quality of data gathering and description.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>	4	3	2
<b>Scientific aspect of the thesis.</b> 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.	5	4	3	2
<b>Practical/applied nature of research.</b> 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.	<b>5</b>	4	3	2
<b>Quality of thesis layout.</b> Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	<b>5</b>	4	3	2

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = poor .

### Additional comments:

The theme of thesis is urgent issue. In spite of the abundance of literature devoted to the cross-cultural studies in marketing most of them refer to the purely scientific cultural research papers, which is not valid from the managerial point of view. Cultural differences as well as social and economic development significantly affect consumer needs to be satisfied by product consumption.

The main research goal of this thesis is to develop guidelines for consumer brand companies for increasing customer motivation to acquire products by the means of a tailored marketing approach. The current study examines the ways cultural values affect personal needs to be satisfied by purchase decisions, the subsequent impact of needs on consumer behaviors and examines whether personal needs have a direct effect on consumer behaviors and attitudes. The author investigates into the relationship of consumer values, needs and purchase behavior in two very interesting and peculiar markets – People's Republic of China and Russian Federation.

At the very beginning of the work on thesis, clear goals and objectives were stated by Yulia Sinitskaya, which defined further character of research, structure of the thesis and the conclusions which were supposed to be formulated as a result of the thesis. The structure of the thesis is justified by the general logic of the research and objectives set and achieved by the author. Yulia Sinitskaya analyzes the factors that should be taken into account while branding products in different cultural environments.

Thesis produces impression as a creative, practice-oriented work, aimed at achieving practical concrete results.

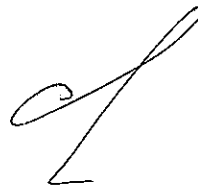
The referee pays special attention to author's erudition, competent use of interdisciplinary research methods.

Speaking about the weak sides of the paper, the referee should mention to make more focus on the problem of brand perception and loyalty. The author examines brand loyalty in a very simple way. Brand loyalty is a sophisticated construct, having different types: attitudinal and behavioral. It is required to the author to acknowledge that brand loyalty can be viewed more broadly than reflected by simple purchase behaviors: the use of loyalty definitions that include both attitudinal and behavioral components will be superior in terms of their predictive ability to conceptualizations of loyalty that are purely behaviorally based.

Master thesis of Yulia A. Sinitskaya meets the requirements of Master in International Business Program, and deserves a/an "excellent" grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date: 26.09. 2011

Referee: Sergey Alexandrovich Starov  
Associate professor, Ph.D. (Economics)

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that appears to be the name 'Sergey Alexandrovich Starov'.