

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business Program
Student:	Elena Nikulina
Title of thesis:	FORMATION OF IMAGE BRAND PERCEPTION IN BRAND PORTFOLIO EXTENSION
	(CASE OF INTERROIR BRAND)

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.

The author has selected for his study a topic which is exceptionally *actual* in branding activities-brand portfolio strategy. Brand portfolio extension is a long investigated topic – the models that were designed in this field 50 years ago are still applicable and to date. Nevertheless, the issue doesn't lose its *high topicality* since it goes far beyond being just a marketing management issue to an expression of corporate strategy that directly affects corporate profitability. The attention to brand portfolio strategies can be explained by the fact that nowadays brand is considered to be the most powerful tool of contemporary marketing. Therefore it is not surprising that many companies consider the objective of successful brand portfolio management to be of paramount importance. As a result, the subject of brand portfolio management remains *urgent* after years of discussion.

The *goal* of the paper is to investigate the impact of various factors on image brand perception in order to develop a model that can be applied to give recommendations concerning the formation of image brand perception in brand At the very beginning of the thesis, *clear goals and objectives* were stated by Elena Nikulina portfolio extension context. 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 topic of master thesis is fully covered and opened.

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.

The paper is *well structured* The paper consists of five chapters. In the first chapter brand portfolio and

brand architecture concepts are explored, study of diverse brand portfolio strategies and image brand characteristics and components is performed. In the second chapter research strategy justification, model development and hypotheses setting are presented.

The third chapter is dedicated to Interroir case study. Current brand portfolio audit is performed, qualitative and quantitative studies are conducted. The results of quantitative study are presented, where main purchase-triggering brand characteristics are derived and factors, influencing the formation of Interroir brand perception, and discussed. The third chapter also contains research limitations and suggestions for future research. Recommendations concerning general image brand perception forming in brand portfolio extension are provided. Specific recommendations for InTerroir brand are also presented in the end of the third chapter

. The author found an *optimal balance* between theoretical and empirical parts of the thesis.

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 *theoretical value* of this paper is to identify the importance of customer-level and brand-level variables on image brand perception and purchase intention in portfolio extension context. The author defined certain aspects of the brand portfolio extension with adequate theoretical coverage. She revealed most notable conceptual frameworks considering brand portfolio expansion explore the relationships between sub-brand and parent brand or among the brands in the portfolio.

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 *quality of selecting research tools and methods* is rather high. To realize the main goal of the research next methods were applied by author in a proper way.

A particular theoretical framework is adjusted to the case and tested on the pre-launch stage of new product development. The case study is also considered to be the most appropriate and relevant method for this research because it is able to handle both qualitative and quantitative data/

There were used a huge amount of different sources of information, which allow to make multi-layer analysis of the topic. It is important that author collected some data from the previous sources, which are of great importance for such kind of research.

The list of *references* is complete and relevant.

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.

There is a need to point out that the work represents a *valuable independent creative research*, which is logic and well structured. From the very beginning till the end of work we can see that there is a very clear statement of the goals of the research and its objectives.

To achieve the stated goal of the research Sullivan's Spillover measurement model is adjusted. The results of the focus group conducted prior to the quantitative research demonstrate that when customers assess the image brand and make a purchase decision they take into consideration the following features: awards, brand name, label design, description on the bottle and bottle design.

The adjustments to the model are made on the basis of investigated in the theoretical part academic literature. Thus, customer-related factors are added to the model: brand consciousness, personal innovativeness and subjective knowledge. These factors are argued to have an impact of image brand perception and, subsequently, on customers' purchase intention.

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 results of the marketing research have *practical value*. The practical contribution of this paper consists in studying image brand perception of an international brand as well as developing certain measures for image brand perception in brand portfolio extension analysis. In order to leverage favorable impact of personal innovativeness facet of customer group international strategy of InTerroir should focus on geographical markets and new niche markets where customer innovativeness is high. InTerroir has to emphasize that it provides constant high quality wine, but its taste always differs not only depending on the year, but also depending on the terroir favorable for a certain type of grapes, which can vary from year to year. Thus by sticking to InTerroir brand the customers will receive different wines of constant high quality.

Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.

Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence.

As for the *bibliography list*, it looks representative as it includes various sources of publications. The articles and monographs were picked up in accordance with the topic and helped the author to make an theoretical overview of the current problem. As the result the master thesis has neat appearance and makes a positive overall impression.

The Master thesis of *Elena Nikulina* meets the requirements for master thesis of Master in International Business program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date 24.09. 2012

Scientific Advisor:

Associate Professor



Starov S.A.