

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business Program
Student:	Yulia Zemtsova
Title of thesis:	«THE INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY ON BRAND MARKET PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF THE VIRICIDE ANTIGRIPPIN NATURPRODUKT»

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 her study a topic which is *actual* in branding activities- the brand equity management. High competition, appearance of a great number of new brands on the market makes the problem of brand equity *very modern and important* for the success of the firm and its brands profitability. The topic is perspective from the scientific point of view that is caused by a number of reasons. Firstly, modern brand equity approach such as customer-based brand equity is one of the tools of identifying the cause of the primary factors affecting consumers' preferences, purchase decisions and the total brand market performance. Therefore they will be carefully considered in the work.

There is a lack of research in the literature that would cover both customer and firm-based brand equity approaches, and link them with the market performance indicators. This research is aimed to fill in this omission by linking customer-based brand equity with brand market performance.

The *theoretical goal* of the paper is to develop an integrative model that would link customer-based brand equity with brand market performance indicators. Among managerial goals are: to find correlation between the brand equity and brand market performance indicators, identify attributes that have the greatest influence on brand market performance, and give recommendations for NaturProdukt company for the management of Antigrippin NaturProdukt brand and also for the companies operating on OTC pharmaceuticals market.

At the very beginning of the thesis, *clear goals and objectives* were stated by Yulia Zemtsova , 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*. It consists of four chapters. The paper consists of three parts. The concept of brand equity, customer-based brand equity approach, and brand market performance indicators are presented in the first chapter. As well as the methodologies of assessing customer-based brand equity that will be used for hypothesis testing and those that have the greatest importance are also emphasized. The second chapter is devoted to the pharmaceuticals market and OTC pharmaceuticals markets as its one on the most perspective trends. This part contains the information about main players, segmentation and trends for future development. The third chapter is dedicated to the evaluation of the viricide Antigrippin NaturProdukt customer-based brand equity using the integrative brand equity model and its linkage with the brand market performance indicators such as brand market share and the level of distribution. The chapter contains the information about the NaturProdukt International Company's history and its brand Antigrippin NaturProdukt description. There have been analyzed and identified

those elements that have the strongest influence on the total brand equity.

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.

Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives is rather high. In her study the author applied the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.

The existing knowledge of concept of brand equity and its measures were thoroughly analyzed. The most actual research methodology of customer-based brand equity was examined and chosen the most appropriate one - the customer-based brand equity evaluation model-matrix. Brand market performance indicators was studied and chosen two most powerful ones as brand market share and brand distribution. The research questions were answered based on the integrated customer-based brand equity evaluation model-matrix.

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. For the data validity Antigrippin NaturProdukt brand was compared with its closest competitor – Theraflu brand of the German Company Novartis AG. The questionnaire was constructed in a way to let the researcher estimate and compare brand equities of the two brands in order to compare them with the brands' market shares and the level of distribution. The process of the identification of the elements with the significant influence on the overall brand equity was conducted only with Antigrippin NaturProdukt brand.

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.

From the *scientific point of view* the research will develop a credible and sensitive measure of brand equity that will correlate financial measures such as brand market share and the level of distribution with the brand asset's measures such as awareness, loyalty, associations, quality, etc. Moreover, there is no application of this model on the pharmaceutical industry in the literature. Thus, the research will contribute a lot to the further research in this topic.

The *goals* of this paper were achieved successfully. It was proven by this work study that in consumer marketing, brand and brand equity often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings, and thus they can be crucial to the success of the companies. Performance measures for customer-based brand equity are also considered, and a model for the management of brand equity provided.

The proposed and tested customer-based evaluation model-matrix has a high relevance. The questions covered in this work should be studied in future in a scale of other industries.

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 research will have a great *practical applicability*. Understanding those elements that will have the strongest influence on the total brand equity in the pharmaceutical industry will help producers and retailers better understand their clients' behavior, factors affecting purchase decisions, prioritize resource utilization, and, as a result, improve market performance and generate more profit.

On the basis of the received results the *recommendations* for the management of Antigrippin NaturProdukt brand are given. Moreover, there are given the overall recommendations for the companies operating on OTC pharmaceuticals market taking into consideration the current market trends and

economic situation.

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

The Master thesis of **Yulia Zemtsova** *meets* the requirements for master thesis of Master in International Business Program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

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