

## REFeree'S REVIEW

<b>Program:</b>	MiM
<b>Student:</b>	Denis Tepliashin
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Digital marketing strategies of companies in FMCG market

<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.	5	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.	5	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.	5	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.	5	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.	5	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.	5	4	3	2

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = the thesis meets all the requirements, 4 = the thesis meets almost all the requirements, 3 = a lot of the requirements are not met in the thesis, 2 = the thesis does not meet the requirements.

### Additional comments:

*Please, elaborate on the above mentioned criteria (we kindly ask you to provide your comments structured as strengths and weaknesses, maximum 5 for each, unless more points are crucial to justify the grade).*

The aim of the thesis is formulated in a very exploratory way: "Main aim of this paper is to find out different approaches and methods towards digital marketing and to evaluate which of them prove to be the most efficient." and thus is questionable, as the number of sources on digital marketing is increasing and there is a need for more precise formulation of the problem or research question. The topic indeed (as Author claims) is relatively new. However, the interest to this field does not requires a very descriptive research without specified angle.

Unfortunately, this approach of Author has affected the style of theoretical review, as it also does not aim to narrow down the focus and is similar to an encyclopedia on various aspects of digital marketing. Such an approach results in a fact that the gap is stated as existing, but not justified or explained (see p. 29).

The described approach results in a fact that the thesis is completely data driven – descriptive first chapter does not lead to any specific question, except for very general ones.

A good idea was to develop a database as a sample of top-50 FMCG companies worldwide in 2017, applying digital marketing tools; from which 4 cases have been selected for a more detailed investigation. Despite this interesting design idea, however, the analysis on the sample of top-50 FMCG companies has been very short and aggregated, lacking depth. The following 4 case studies have been also presented in a

rather descriptive way and result in a very simple table (Table 1). This table is perceived as a starting point for a discussion, not an output of a master thesis, based on theoretical analysis, secondary data analysis, investigation of top-50 FMCG companies as claimed by Author.

On the contrary, Author feels differently and states “Thus, it can be concluded that all of the research questions of the thesis were answered, i.e. most effective digital marketing tools identified with the success factors and the comparison of the main companies was provided. As a result, the research goal was achieved.” (p. 50).

The overall conclusion is that the lack of focus from the beginning has misled the Author into a descriptive and non-critical analysis, which does not help to grasp the reality of digital marketing, but rather repeats information without processing it into new knowledge.

Master thesis of Denis Tepliashin in general meets the requirements of the Master in Management program, and according to the reviewer’s opinion deserves a/an “satisfactory (E)” grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date May, 30<sup>th</sup> 2018

Referee: Dr., Associate Professor Vera A. Rebiazina

