

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master in International Business Program
Student:	Olga Vazhnichaia
Title of thesis:	«IMPACT OF COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS ON THE IMAGE OF GLOBAL LUXURY BRANDS IN RUSSIA»

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 *topic of research* is rarely studied which might indicate challenges in it – counterfeiting is a growing problem, but poorly studied. Counterfeit goods are designed identically with the genuine items. Very often these copies are sold as the original ones, or just provide customers with the discounted version of authentic pieces, openly claiming of their origin.

The *main goal* of the current master thesis was to develop knowledge about the impact of counterfeit products on the perception of luxury brands' image in the eyes of genuine item consumers in Russia.

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.

In general the work gives an impression of *a complete and logical study*. Although the structure of thesis is presented logically, the author violated the rules of the graphic design of the text structure, not using such designations as chapters and paragraphs. The absence of formalization of the content structure made more difficult the readability and perception of the content of the research.

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 *objectives* stated in the thesis *are fully covered* by the represented analysis. Due to the theory overview Olga Vazhnichaia came up to some specifications and problems that exist nowadays. 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 deep theoretical overview of the current problem.

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.

Selected tools and methods appropriate to the issue. Used in the data meet the criteria of reliability and adequacy of the tools employed.

The author conducted twenty in-depth interviews with genuine item consumers. Besides that the author carried on an additional survey that was distributed in the Internet. The survey was aimed to investigate the customers' opinion about luxury consumption in Russia and the impact of counterfeit products on it.

All the data obtained was put together and transferred to IBM SPSS software for subsequent hypothesis checking.
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.
<p>The topic is highly ambiguous. The fact that counterfeit is an illegal action puts certain limitations on the design of the research as well as on the interpretation of the results.</p> <p>The revision of the work showed <i>the individual approach</i> of the student to the stated problem. It is shown by the literature that was chosen and analyzed, methodology of the research and the practical application. Counterfeit might be considered as an extreme version of product imitation, the results obtained in this thesis might be useful for research about brands' copycats. Especially how they affect the original product and how marketing managers can protect their brands. The existing research might be used for researches in different fields, such as legal, psychology of consumption and others.</p> <p>The theoretical results of this research might be applied by studies aimed to investigate the reasons and consequences of counterfeit consumption.</p>
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.
<p>The current research can be seen <i>as actual and managerially applicable</i>.</p> <p>Based on the suggested recommendations companies are able to prevent or mitigate the negative effects from the use of counterfeit brands by unfair competitors. This problem requires long-term planning and consolidated work of government and multinational companies.</p>
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.
<p>Master thesis has neat appearance (except the graphic design of the content structure) and makes a positive overall impression, All the figures and tables of the work have sources and references.</p>

The Master thesis of *Olga Vazhnichaia «IMPACT OF COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS ON THE IMAGE OF GLOBAL LUXURY BRANDS IN RUSSIA»* meets the requirements for master thesis of MIB program, thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Referee:



Associate Professor

Starov S.A.

12/06/2015

