**SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR’S REFERENCE**

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| **Program:** | **Master in Management (MIM)** |
| **Student:** | **Aleksandra Tomilova** |
| **Title of thesis:** | **Application of customer-based brand equity model for strengthening the competitive position of UNIQLO brand on the Russian market** |

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| **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 *goal* of the research is to provide an understanding of customer-based retail brand equity construct and to measure customer-based retail brand equity of apparel brand UNIQLO on the Russian market |
| **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*. The first chapter provides a comprehensive overview and comparative analysis on the main extant studies within the research territory, while the second chapter reveals company background, situational analysis and competitive positioning. The third chapter contains empirical analysis, including outlining research design and theoretical model, hypotheses testing, results discussion and implications formulation, limitations and conclusion.  . |
| **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. |
| High overall quality and reasonability of the research is observed. All the objectives are deeply covered. Well justified methods and latest trends in the research are applied.  Theoretical part represents a profound theoretical investigation, where the analytical approach is applied to the analysis of the existing theory. The empirical study is based on the theoretical background and addresses the practical aims of the review. Comments and interpretation of the existing theories, researches and results are provided throughout all the parts.  Deductive approach was chosen, starting from the defining the more general concepts (brand equity) to understanding the customer-based brand equity and, lastly, providing the contemporary understanding of retail brand equity construct. |
| **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. |
| Quality of data gathering and description is high. The research is independent and well executed. Sample and research method are well described and justified by the author |
| **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. |
| Scientific aspect of the thesis is represented by thorough analysis and interpretation of up-to-date theoretical sources and secondary data both on the concept of retail brand equity construct. Deep understanding of the topic and integrated approach to the analysis of the problems are demonstrated. The individual approach is shown by the author’s ability to clearly formulate and justify one’s own point of view and scientific thinking applied to solving research problems. |
| **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. |
| Thesis produces impression as a creative, practice-oriented work, aimed at achieving practical concrete results. The current research can be seen *as actual and managerially applicable*.  Managerial implications are formulated on the basis of the conducted analysis. |
| **Quality of thesis layout.** Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references. |
| The bibliography list in general is rather representative as it includes sources from different authors and of different years of publication. The articles and monographs were chosen according to the topic and helped student to make a complete theoretical overview on the problem  However, it should be noted that not all the figures and tables are numbered. |
| **Originality of the text.** All sources of match identified by the Safe Assign system follow the allowed cases, the paper does not contain any elements of plagiarism.  The thesis text is original and *does not contain elements of plagiarism* |

The Master thesis of Aleksandra Tomilova **meets** **the requirements** for master thesis of MIM program , thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

04/06/2016

Scientific Advisor

Associate Professor

 Starov S.A.