

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master of International Business
Student:	Olesya A. Bakharevskaya
Title of thesis:	Marketing Communications and Conspicuous Consumption: The Case of World Luxury Empires Promotion

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 chosen for this research is both up-to-date and relevant for the marketing science as it is aimed at identifying key drivers of conspicuous consumptions that has become a major force on the luxury market. In the relevance of the topic the student stated the importance of the tailored approach to marketing communications by luxury brands, taking into consideration what motivated consumers to purchase conspicuous goods. The end result could be an increase in market share and/or customer base. With regards to the topic the student stated a comprehensive goal – to come up with guidelines for luxury brands communication strategies applicable for the 21st century and taking into consideration all the present trends. The goal required several objectives to be investigated and all of them were formulated to logically reflect the steps of the study.

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 thesis consists of three parts that are interconnected as they follow the objectives stated in the introductions. The first one – the literature review – presents a theoretical overview on the research topic. The second part gives an overview of the present-day situation on the luxury market and identifies key players as well as future trends and challenges. The third part is the empirical research on the thesis topic. The structure is logically built as it goes from the general issues of the topic and comes to more precise ones. Introduction and conclusion are also interdependent as the conclusion makes an overview on the main findings and gives the answers to the problems stated in the introduction.

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 paper are fully covered by the represented analysis. Due to the theory overview the student came up to some specifications and problems that exist nowadays. 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 the student to make a complete theoretical overview of the 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.

As a methodology of the work the student has chosen questionnaires that were answered by a group of conspicuous consumers. The research on the issue gives qualitative analysis as it identifies key motivations for consumers to engage in conspicuous behaviour. The empirical part of the thesis includes a sample questionnaire that corresponds with the objectives and goal of the research. However, there is a rather significant drawback of the empirical part of the paper: the sample of the respondents is rather small with a limited age group of and lacks international representatives. Those issues

decrease the possibility to generalize the results.
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.
The revision of the work showed the individual approach 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. For example, the student identifies key conspicuous consumption drivers from a massive body of research in various fields that she later on applies to the research. This shows the individual approach to the analysis of the material and the ability to build own frameworks on the issue as it should be done in a scientific work.
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 research presents a rather interesting perspective on the new developments in the field of marketing communications for luxury brands, especially covering the issue of brand's online presence. The research on the most recent developments in the marketing communications with the advent of the Internet as the main channel of communication between brands and consumers makes the work in general very relevant and at the same time identifies the issues to be addressed by the luxury brands in the 21 st century. The theoretical and empirical analysis helped to see the real situation with the marketing of luxury brands as well as what drives conspicuous consumers. The information received gives a new basis for the marketing communications development and guidelines for a better-targeted approach. The guidelines can be applicable to various brands with regards to the specification of luxury marketing. So the practical recommendations on the issue and their realization were developed to the full extent.
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.
The work in general has a good appearance and gives a positive impression. All the figures and tables of the work have sources and references. The referrals to the authors are marked with the reference to certain monographs or articles. No grammar mistakes were found.

The Master thesis of Olesya A. Bakharevskaya meets for master thesis of the Master of International Business program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

June 13, 2011

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