

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

Program:	Master of International Business
Student:	Ekaterina V. Kudryavtseva
Title of thesis:	Global Fashion as a Factor of the Formation of Conspicuous Consumption

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 present master thesis is declared as research paper (p.8). Topicality of the research paper is correctly formulated by the author in the Introduction to the work.

The goal of the work is "to identify the main fashion factors that form conspicuous consumption" (p.10) and the five research questions are stated under the goal. The tasks are presented in a logical way and specify each step of the master thesis, starting with the analysis of the existing scientific knowledge on the current phenomenon, finding the research gap, choosing the methods applicable to the current research and implementation of these methods, then steps for analysis of the results of the conducted in-depth interviews, and, finally, preparation of the recommendations for international luxury companies.

In general, the research topic, the goal, the research questions and the tasks are stated correctly and fully comply with the whole content of the research.

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 theoretical and practical material that is presented in the work is well-structured and well-aligned; the logic of material representation is kept and it is consistent with the stated content.

The paper consists of four parts. The first two parts are dedicated to the theoretical foundation of the research; the third part includes the complex of qualitative methods applicable to the current research and the methods implementation (i.e., the results analysis). In the fourth part the recommendations for international luxury companies are presented based on the results and analysis of the in-depth interviews and applied to the segmentation of the conspicuous consumers offered in the third part of the research paper.

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. The author formulates the research problem (the research gap) based on the analysis of an extensive list of inter-disciplinary sources, mostly modern, and offers a distinct solution for the stated 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.

In the third part of the paper the set of methods was described applicable to the current paper. It is "a complex of qualitative research techniques used because of the nature of the field of research and the type of consumers: method of observation, method of screening questionnaire, "snow-ball" method to find the correct sample for the research, in-depth interviews, and a method of textual analysis" (p.79). Therefore, the selection of the sample is proved methodologically and there are no questions justifying its quality. Moreover, for the in-depth interviews a well-defined and structured guide is created by the author (appendix 2, p.90).

The conducted interviews let the author get the qualitative and truthful information on respondents' feelings, emotions, thoughts about their relation to fashion, luxury brands, their motives, factors influencing them, their awareness on global brands and other ideas. With the method of textual analysis the transcripts of the interviews were analyzed and the main patterns or themes of the conspicuous consumers' responses in accordance with specific feelings, emotions, and ideas are classified in groups and presented in a general table (appendix 4, p.136) for further descriptive and explanatory analysis. The analysis and the results were not just presented verbally but also graphically in tables and figures.

The bibliography list presents an inter-disciplinary choice of relevant and reliable sources which guarantee a comprehensive study of the current phenomenon. It includes both foreign and Russian sources of different years of publication. Most of them are modern which gives more actuality and truth to the research.

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 first two parts of the paper include the analysis of the existing inter-discipline scientific works on the current phenomenon, conspicuous consumption, modern trends in conspicuous consumption, motives of conspicuous consumers to make lavish spending and the role of fashion in the formation of this consumption. Summing up the theoretical analysis the author makes a conclusion and explains the research gap which gives ideas for the current research. As a result of the third part of the paper a new segmentation of conspicuous consumers is offered relating to their lifestyles.

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.

A study represented in the work definitely has a practical component. In its fourth part the recommendations are offered for the global luxury companies operating on the Russian market for luxury product's categories which are susceptible to fashion influences "in order to help the companies to increase the sales of the luxury products, improve the service in the boutiques, comment on advertisement and other idea which let he companies make more clients loyal and gain new ones" (p.81).

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 very professional appearance and gives a lot of examples of well-performed graphical solutions, especially for visual representation of each part of the analysis and results, segmentation of conspicuous consumers and recommendations for luxury companies.

The Master thesis of Ekaterina V. Kudryavtseva meets for master thesis of the Master of International Business program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

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