

STEPS Students Report

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The subject of my research work was Vending business in Japan. I have been studying vending business in Russia from January. Therefore, it was interesting and useful for me to compare the development of vending business in these two countries. The topics which I studied during my stay in the University of Tokyo were marketing, distribution and international business. When I came to the University of Tokyo I got a student card and a card which allowed me to use the library. In the School of Engineering I got my working place in the laboratory (computer with an Internet connection). Using online library on that computer allowed me to download useful articles and some books connected to vending business. The huge drawback I have met was language barrier. I found a lot of interesting articles about vending business but most of them were in Japanese (I understood their content because introduction was in English). I borrowed several books connected to Marketing and Positioning in the library of Economic Department. I focused a lot of attention on these subjects because marketing of vending business is very specific and different from marketing of fast moving consumer goods.



Besides finding and analyzing useful information my host professor Hatoyama sensei helped me to arrange a meeting with a Tokyo office of DyDo Drinco (A Japanese company which sells beverages through vending machines). Mr. Mitamura explained me all unclear questions about company strategy, distribution channels, marketing and international business. As I was in the

office of this company in Moscow I can compare them. Tokyo office of DyDo Drinco was much huger and Mr. Mitamura (Corporate Officer, Division Director of Marketing Department, General Manager of International Business Department) was very nice answering all my questions required for my survey. Besides DyDo Hatoyama sensei also was able to arrange a meeting with Suntory (another Japanese company who sells beverages through vending machines and convenience stores) but because of lack of time I was not able to meet company's representatives. In Japan it is not possible to arrange a meeting quickly. Usually all Japanese people plan their schedule in advance. In

addition to company visits, I created a survey to analyze the consumer behavior. I conducted the same survey in Russia to define the behavior of Russian customers. To compare vending business in Russia and Japan I had to know the behavior of Japanese consumers. The survey was translated into Japanese language in order to involve as more participants as possible. Overall, 59 people took part in the survey. Comparing to Russian consumers, Japanese do not care about the brand of vending machines and this can easily be explained with a huge amount of vending machines installed in Japan. As for beverages, in Japan people tend to buy coffee, green tea or other types of tea. Japanese consumers almost do not mind about the price of the beverages sold through vending machines and the priority for them when buying a drink is a location of vending machine. Vending machine is associated with convenience.

Throughout my stay in Japan professor Hatoyama-sensei and students from the School of Civil Engineering helped me a lot. I enjoyed my stay in Japan a lot. People in Japan were very nice and kind to me. The University of Tokyo is considered as the best university in Japan. Students are hardworking: some students stayed in the laboratory from 9 am till 8 pm. The campus was a bit complicated in the beginning but I got used to it in the end.

I am very grateful to the administrations of both Moscow State University and the University of Tokyo for such opportunity to participate in this program. I found useful information for my research work, conducted a survey among Japanese consumers and visited Tokyo office of DyDo Drinco. All this data will help me to finish the research work. Thank you! I hope the relations between the universities will improve further!

