



## POLICE ACADEMY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN PRAGUE

prof. Ing. Martina Blašková, Ph.D.

Vice-rector for Science and Research

Lhotecká 559/7, 143 01 Prague 4, P.O.BOX 54

tel.: +420 974 828 507, e-mail: blaskova@polac.cz

---

### Opponent review of the dissertation

**Name of student:** Zuhair Abbas

**Dissertation title:** The Role of Green HRM in Fostering Corporate Sustainability in the Automotive Industry

**Opponent:** Prof. Ing. Martina Blašková, PhD., Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague

### Importance of the topic of the dissertation

The submitted dissertation is 141 pages long (including appendices and an overview of the student's publication activity). As it follows from the title of the thesis, the author focused on solving a very current topic. The combination of environmental management of human resources (green HRM) and perspectives of corporate sustainability represents a valuable and at the same time stimulating challenge of European management theory and modern corporate management in the Czech automotive industry.

### Dissertation objectives and their fulfillment

The scientific-research argumentation is the assumption that corporate sustainability is a necessary phenomenon that increasingly attracts the attention of automotive companies in the Czech Republic, so that they accept changes in their procedures in the area of human resources (p. 8). The thesis presents an inspiring imperative to explore the potential benefits of combining two theoretical perspectives: abilities, motivation and opportunity theory (AMO) and paradox theory (p. 16). In accordance with the established four research questions, the *main objective* of the dissertation is: "To fill the research gap by creating a comprehensive framework for green human resource management and the sustainability of companies in the automotive industry of the Czech Republic" (p. 8). The main objective of the thesis is *suitably decomposed into four partial research objectives* (p. 8 – 9). All these objectives can be considered clearly formulated and sufficiently scientifically ambitious.

All objectives are appropriately related to the defined research gaps, both theoretical gaps (the impact of green human resource management on the sustainability of automotive companies; top management commitment and green organizational culture; interactive effects of sustainable leadership on green human resource management practices and corporate sustainability; p. 9 – 10), as well as methodological gaps (use of mixed methods; p. 10 – 11).

Through appropriately chosen scientific procedures, methods and techniques, *the defined goals were achieved.*

## **The solution procedure and the chosen processing methods**

The dissertation has a **clear continuity and an appropriately chosen procedure** for its solution. In the opening chapters, the *correct logical-theoretical genesis* is followed. The research problem is defined here and a thorough analysis of all theoretical concepts investigated in the work is carried out: green human resource management, sustainability, theory of capabilities, motivation and opportunities, theory of paradox, education in the field of environmental behavior, performance management, employee and management engagement, green culture and sustainable leadership. The author addresses all the mentioned concepts with due scientific attention, while he also tries to indicate the potential connection between them. Table No. 1 (p. 25 – 28) deepens the author's insight into the topic in an excellent way. It clearly defines the dependent variable of the research (sustainability of the company), as well as the independent variables (environmental education, performance management and employee engagement), mediating variables (top management commitment and green culture) and a moderating variable (sustainable leadership). Figure No. 5 (p. 28) is also very useful for understanding the logics of the entire thesis and the defined hypotheses. Somewhat unconventionally, a total of 17 partial hypotheses are defined in the thesis. Although their number is considerable, the advantage can be seen in the fact that they capture in detail all the author's research objectives.

*The research methodology is explained in detail* in the following chapter, including the research description, philosophical paradigm, both phases of the survey (quantitative [questionnaire technique with the participation of 194 automotive company employees] and qualitative [content analysis of 9 sustainability reports from each automotive company involved]) and procedure when choosing a sample, preparing and analyzing data and evaluating determined variables. All of the scientific methods and techniques used, and in particular the application of the mixed-method strategy, are *chosen appropriately and allowed to explore the chosen topic sufficiently precisely* and in the necessary mutual contexts. It is necessary to appreciate the responsibility of the author in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of direct questioning (language mutations of the questionnaire, application of the Likert scale, pretest, preservation of research ethics, repeated reminders of respondents with a request to participate in the survey, etc.). Table No. 2 (p. 39) and Figure No. 7 (p. 40) are helpful in this section, which summarize the comprehensive research methodology of the dissertation. Table No. 3 (p. 41 – 43) clearly lists all 7 research constructs, including the definition of questionnaire items and the original sources of their creation (publication). *Overall, this chapter of the work is done at a very good and inspiring level.*

*The results chapter details all logical and statistical investigations and verifications.* It justifies the use of the SEM (structural equation modeling) technique, presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, examines the consistency and validity of the analytical tool for all 7 constructs using many methods (Cronbach Alpha, composite reliability, mean extracted deviation, Fornell-Larcker criterion, predictive validity, structural model etc.). The results are documented by a series of tables, structural equation model testing, etc., with the *moderate predictive weight of the research performed*. Using all calculations and models, the author supported the potential validity of 13 of the total number of 17 defined hypotheses.

In the qualitative (content) analysis, the author subsequently focused the assessment attention on four basic research topics: green initiatives, responsible behavior, digital business models and employee care. Figure No. 11, summarizing the most significant findings from the analyzes carried out, has great informative value. Again, even in this part, the procedure is very precise and fully defensible.

The entire process of the student's dissertation effort is *successfully completed in the discussion (controversial) chapter and the final chapter*. They also define the overall benefits of the thesis, namely theoretical, methodological and practical (social), and especially comprehensive conclusions, limitations and possible future direction of the conducted research.

### **The results of the dissertation and the concrete contribution of the student**

Several results and elements of the dissertation can be considered beneficial, many of which have already been mentioned in previous passages of the assessment. **The most significant results and benefits include**, for example:

- Precise detection and naming of knowledge gaps in the domestic and world literature, in the sense of targeting many environmental aspects of management in the automotive industry and their interlinking (sustainability of automotive companies, sustainable leadership, environmental management of human resources, etc.);
- Experimental connection of two theoretical perspectives, namely the theory of AMO and the theory of paradox, and the justification of the correctness of this connection (through the entire spectrum of defined questions and hypotheses and confirmation of the potential truth of most of them);
- An excellent spectrum of applied analytical procedures (quantitative and qualitative research) and statistical methods and testing, demonstrating the undeniable relevance of all initial assumptions and generated findings.

### **Significance for practice and development of the scientific field**

The most important **for practice** are the **challenges, examples and inspiration** presented logically and supported by world authorities, on the one hand, how to increase the performance of the automotive industry in Central Europe, and especially in the Czech Republic, and at the same time, on the other hand, how to orient future strategically thought-out management and sustainably implemented and sustainability supporting the development of *automotive companies*. It is obvious that both the theoretical and the methodological and discussion part of the dissertation provide a lot of background for this endeavor.

In addition to the benefits mentioned in the previous part of the assessment (revelation and naming of knowledge gaps, experimental combination of two theoretical perspectives, spectrum of applied procedures and methods), **additional facts and results** can undoubtedly be identified as the most significant benefits **for the development of the scientific field**:

1. Systematization and development of theoretical knowledge on sustainable development and many sciences on the management of companies, groups and individuals (management, human resource management, strategic management, sustainable

development management, etc.) carried out skillfully and with a significant amount of scientific precision.

2. The results and findings resulting from the two phases of the research carried out, both quantitative and qualitative, and a subsequent thorough discussion of the defined hypotheses, related to similar studies in the domestic and especially the world dimension, which made it possible to confirm new ideas, necessity and also challenges in the field of future sustainable development.
3. The fact that the assumption of the author (as well as other global research teams) about the supporting influence of top management engagement, environmental culture and corporate sustainability was not confirmed can be viewed as beneficial for literature; this finding will certainly inspire further research activities, not only in Europe, but it can be assumed that also in the world.

### **Literature, formal preparation and language level of the dissertation**

The spectrum of used literary sources can be positively evaluated. It is a qualitatively suitable and quantitatively adequate combination of mainly international, but also domestic scientific papers and documents dealing with the chosen topic.

The language side of the thesis (the thesis is written in English) is for the most part standard. In places, the structure of the sentences is less understandable, and the sentences are prematurely ended with a full stop, but logically continue with a “quasi-next” sentence. In many sentences, the main words (nouns) are missing, as an example you can use the wording on p. 47: *“The is survey-based research and data were collected from a single source; traditional process bias was a potential concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).”*

Among other imperfections, it should be noted that the author relatively often repeats ideas that were already presented in the previous text (for example, when repeatedly mentioning a gap in the literature – in several places of the thesis, only with different rhetoric and citing other works, when justifying the origin initial research sample, etc.). Such duplication (and sometimes even “triplication”) disrupts the consistency of the thesis and makes one wonder whether the text should have been paid more attention to language and syntax. Despite these imperfections, the overall stylistic aspect can be assessed as relatively good.

The formal arrangement of the thesis is satisfactory. It enables a good orientation in the text of the dissertation. The quality of the images could be higher (especially the downloaded ones), but it is still sufficient.

### **Publication activity of the student**

The student’s publication activity is of exceptional quality. It is admirable how many scientific papers were prepared by a student in the position of first author. Almost all of the student’s outputs are published in prestigious journals and conference proceedings, which are listed in the international databases Web of Science and/or Scopus. With an absolute dose of modesty, it can be said that they are very instigating. It is obvious that the student also received a large number of citation responses to these publications.

## **Dissertation comments and opponent questions**

Despite the high content quality of the entire dissertation, there are minor logical and temporal **imperfections** in it. As one of the many clues, for example: “*To date, the empirical research shows top management commitment implement sustainability transition (Spencer et al., 2013; M.Y. Yusliza et al., 2019).*” The author uses the temporal conjunction “to date”, but it is substantiated by studies from 2013 and 2019, which represents a 10-year or 4-year-old period and sounds somewhat strange in relation to “today”. A similar temporal inconsistency appears in the theoretical part of the dissertation in several places. The timing of the following idea and quote (p. 37) is also debatable: “*The past two decades have seen a dramatic shift in interest among academics in using qualitative research methods to investigate more complicated business issues, borrowing and modifying techniques from more established fields (Miles & Huberman, 1994).*” Is this the period of the last two decades, i.e., studies published since the beginning of the 21st century (the third decade is already underway), or as the citation used refers, studies published in the 1970s and 1980s?

In an effort to develop a stimulating discussion at the defense of the dissertation, it would be possible to state the following **two questions**:

1. How can you explain the surprising but original finding that the assumption of a mediating relationship between top management commitment, green culture and corporate sustainability was not confirmed? Do you think that this is a specific feature of the purely Czech business sphere, or perhaps also of Central Europe?
2. Given that the dissertation should also define a comprehensive model or a set of recommendations for improving the identified situation as a standard, what more specific measures (apart from the measures presented at the end of the thesis) would be appropriate to take for the overall strengthening of the sustainable management of human resources employed in Czech car companies?

## **Final evaluation**

Summarizing the statements, given in the text of the review, and considering the fact that the submitted dissertation successfully met all the defined objectives

***I recommend a dissertation for defense***

and after a successful defense, I recommend to Faculty of Management and Economics of  
Tomáš Bata University in Zlín

***award Mr. Zuhair Abbas the title of philosophiae doctor (PhD.).***

*Martina Blahová*

Prague, 26 October 2023