

# Opponent's report

on the doctoral thesis: " The Role of Institutional Pressure and Corporate Social Responsibility on Green Marketing Adoption and Relative Competitive Advantages"

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## 1. Topicality of the Dissertation Topic

The dissertation addresses the increasingly relevant intersection of institutional theory, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and green marketing, with a particular focus on the Vietnamese banking sector. Considering global sustainability trends and growing institutional and regulatory pressures on businesses to adopt environmentally responsible practices, **the topic is timely and important.**

However, while the relevance of CSR and green marketing is unquestionable, **the** specificity of the Vietnamese context is **insufficiently justified**. The dissertation does not convincingly explain what makes Vietnam a particularly compelling or unique case, nor how the findings contribute to broader international academic or practical discourse. Additionally, the title omits a reference to the Vietnamese setting, which could mislead readers regarding the study's scope.

## 2. Fulfilment of the Dissertation Objectives

The dissertation outlines several research objectives and questions. Most of these are well-aligned with the research design and analysis. The author succeeds in exploring the relationships between institutional pressures, CSR, green marketing adoption, and relative competitive advantage using a structural equation modelling approach.

Nonetheless, **some issues undermine the clarity and coherence of the objectives:**

- **Research Question 5** (p. 27) is not linked to any of the stated objectives, and it is neither supported by data collection nor addressed in the findings.
- The inclusion of recommendations as a stated objective (it is mentioned in the Abstract as an aim) is not consistent with the purpose of a doctoral dissertation. Recommendations should follow from findings, not constitute an objective in themselves.

Overall, while most objectives are met, the logical coherence between objectives, research questions, and methods could be improved.

### 3. Problem-Solving Approach and Dissertation Results

The methodological approach is generally sound. The author employs **Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)**, which is appropriate for analysing complex relationships among latent variables, especially with a moderate sample size ( $N = 288$ ). The pilot study and sample structure are clearly presented.

#### Positive aspects include:

- Transparent description of measurement scales.
- Reasonable data validation procedures.
- Clear presentation of model results and path coefficients.

However, **some methodological and analytical limitations should be addressed:**

- **Respondent selection:** The sampling method via HR departments lacks transparency. I would like a deeper discussion on how participants were selected and whether the sample is representative.
- **Measurement scales:** Regarding items used for the measurement, the distinction between normative and coercive pressure is unclear, as both involve customers and investors (p. 102-103). Additionally, the measurement of CSR is limited to its social and environmental aspects, which may not fully capture its broader scope. The measurement of relative competitive advantage relies solely on self-assessment by bank employees, which raises concerns regarding objectivity and potential bias, as perceived competitive advantage may not accurately reflect actual organisational performance.
- **Cross-sectional design:** The study's design limits causal inference, but this limitation is only briefly acknowledged.
- **Moderating effects:** The dissertation does not explore potential moderating roles of the three institutional pressures (coercive, normative, mimetic), despite this being a common approach in institutional theory literature. Instead, the author treats these pressures as independent variables directly influencing CSR and green marketing adoption (GMA). It would have been valuable to understand why this conceptual decision was made, particularly since a moderating framework could offer richer insights into the *conditional* effects of institutional environments on organisational behaviour. A brief justification of this choice—whether theoretical, empirical, or methodological—would have strengthened the conceptual clarity of the model.
- **Interpretation of significance:** The author refers to certain effects as “significant” without sufficient discussion of the practical or substantive effect sizes. For example, the mediating role of CSR is described as “key,” which seems overstated given the coefficients presented in Table 14.

Despite these limitations, the core findings are reasonably supported by the data.

### 4. Practical Significance and Contribution to the Field

From a **practical perspective**, the dissertation offers actionable insights for banks in Vietnam aiming to improve their CSR and green marketing practices under institutional pressures. The study is relevant for managers and policymakers interested in aligning sustainability practices with regulatory expectations.

From a **theoretical standpoint**, the study contributes to the institutional theory literature by highlighting the mediating role of CSR in the relationship between institutional pressures and competitive advantage. However, the theoretical contribution remains somewhat limited due to conceptual overlaps and a lack of clarity in definitions (e.g., “relative competitive advantage” is not clearly defined).

The work could benefit from a more nuanced comparison between developing and developed countries, especially in terms of competitive advantage in the banking sector.

## 5. Formal Structure and Language Quality

The overall **structure of the dissertation** would benefit from significant improvement. Several sections are either **redundant** or **not clearly distinguished**, which leads to confusion and affects the logical flow of the work. For example:

- Research questions and research gaps are introduced before the literature review, whereas it is more conventional to present them after reviewing the relevant literature.
- Chapter 5.1 presents *theoretical implications*, while Chapter 6.2 discusses *theoretical contributions*, without clearly explaining the distinction between the two.
- Similarly, *practical implications* are discussed in Chapter 5.2, whereas *managerial and policy implications* appear in Chapter 6.3, again with overlapping content.
- The **limitations** of the study are outlined in **two different sections**: Chapter 3.6 (Methodology) and Chapter 6.4 (Conclusion), with partial repetition.

Additionally, there is no dedicated discussion chapter, which would normally contextualise the findings, discuss their limitations, and link them back to the literature. Some elements of a discussion are scattered in the implications and conclusion sections.

The **language level** is generally acceptable, although occasional grammatical errors and awkward phrasing appear. These do not substantially affect comprehension, but careful proofreading would improve readability.

## 6. Publication Activity of the Candidate

The candidate lists **five publications**, including:

- Two journal articles (only one where the author is the first author),
- Three conference papers.

Only **two publications are thematically aligned** with the dissertation topic. The rest, while acceptable for fulfilling formal requirements, do not clearly support the research focus. The number of publications meets the minimum standard, but the quality and relevance could be stronger.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The dissertation presents a **relevant and up-to-date research topic**, accompanied by an appropriate methodological framework and generally coherent findings. However, it suffers

from structural and conceptual inconsistencies and provides unclear contextual justification. Formal and linguistic shortcomings further limit the dissertation's overall clarity.

Despite the above-mentioned concerns, I consider the dissertation a valid and worthy contribution to the field of management studies. From my point of view, the author has demonstrated the ability to:

- formulate a relevant scientific problem,
- select an appropriate methodology,
- conduct research,
- systematically interpret results,
- and formulate implications for theory and practice.

In sum, the dissertation meets the formal requirements for a doctoral thesis, and **I recommend it for defence.**

#### **Proposed Questions for the Defence:**

1. You base your model on institutional theory. Could you explain why you chose to treat institutional pressures as independent variables rather than as moderators?
2. You rely on self-assessment to measure relative competitive advantage. How do you address concerns about subjectivity and bias in this approach? Could more objective indicators have been used?
3. Why is the Vietnamese banking sector a particularly relevant context for this study? What lessons do you believe are transferable to international contexts?
4. How might your findings differ if the study were conducted in a developed country's banking sector?

In Zlín, 27 November 2025

*Matejka'*