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Doctoral Thesis Review

Title: „Exploring social eWOM intention in social commerce environment:
Individual-level Culture Values as a Moderator“

„Zkoumání eWOM v prostředí sociální komerce: Vliv kulturních hodnot
jednotlivce“

Author: Quyen Phu Thi Phan - Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Faculty of
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Degree programme: P6208 Economic and Management

Degree course: 6208V038 Management and Economics
/Management a ekonomika/

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Ing. Michal Pilík, Ph.D.

The doctoral thesis with the title „*Exploring social eWOM intention in social commerce environment: Individual-level Culture Values as a Moderator*“ can be considered as actual and appropriate issue in the research area of Management and Economics.

The author investigated the new concept of social commerce environment influencing consumers' behaviour.

From the submitted doctoral thesis it is evident that its main objective was to present a comprehensive research in this research area. The issue is also important in contemporary conditions in terms of digitalization, e-commerce and online shopping in the conditions of consumers' behavior changes.

I state, that this thesis is processed at a very good level of elaboration. The main chapters are organized in logical and correct order. The thesis includes the introduction, four main chapters (Literature review, Research design and methodology, Qualitative study, Quantitative research results) and also discussion and conclusion.

a) **Appropriateness of the research topic and research objectives fulfillment** (i.e. academic/applied significance) - research topic is actual and appropriate. The thesis brings an adequate scientific contribution to the discipline Management and Economics. The issue brings also practical economic and social benefits for the selected sectors of the e-commerce and online shopping with specific focus on social commerce environment and so called social e-WOM (electronic Word of Mouth). The scientific research goal of the thesis was formulated clearly and adequate to research topic. Primary in the research the influence of social commerce environment on social e-WOM and consumer behaviour

was investigated. Additionally, the effect of individual culture values as moderator in the social commerce environment and social e-WOM was considered. I can state, that the research goals were fulfilled.

- b) **The methodological framework, research results and contribution** - author chose appropriate methodological procedures to solve the given research problem, taking into account large amount of sufficiently recent domestic and foreign scientific literature (I appreciate that more than 200 literature sources mostly foreign scientific journals articles were used).

The contribution of this scientific work is an analysis of the current state in the research area from a theoretical point of view. Based on the research results achieved in the analytical part (Literature review), he proposed goals, research hypotheses and methodology of the doctoral thesis (Chapter 3). The scientific aim of the thesis is formulated challenging and authors' research contributes to development in this research area.

The Scope of the research is illustrated in Table 1.1 (p. 18). Conceptual methodology framework is illustrated in Figure 1.1 (p. 19). The research was performed in two principal stages. The first stage contains a qualitative study to develop research hypothesis. In the second stage, was conducted a questionnaire survey and collected data in order to test the research hypotheses using several multidimensional data analysis techniques.

The objective of research was to develop a theoretical model which integrates social commerce constructs, trust, online customer experience, perceived value co-creation, and national cultural values that influence Social e-WOM intention of Generation Y (ages 18 to 35) consumers through Facebook especially in Vietnam.

Based on the research background and motivation, author developed 12 general research hypotheses (a total of 22 partial research hypotheses). The proposed hypotheses were explained through two main theories: Stimulus – Organism – Response (S-O-R) and Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic). The basic research model and hypothesis of the research are displayed in Figure 3.1. (p. 34).

The research is designed in two main parts. Firstly, qualitative research for design research questions, hypothesis and questionnaire. Subsequently, the quantitative research realised through an online and also an offline survey (questionnaire based on a seven-point Likert scale, from 1 - totally disagree to 7 - totally agree). Generation Y in Vietnam (18-35 years old) as the target respondents for online survey was included. As the target social working site was selected the Facebook. The quota sampling process in term of gender and age in Facebook usage in Vietnam will be preferred (N=325 valid respondents).

Based on the results of the literature review and the qualitative study, 22 partial research hypotheses in the quantitative research were developed (Chapter 4.4). In order to achieve the purpose of the research and test research hypotheses, SPSS 22.0 and SmartPLS 3.0 were employed to analyse the collected data. The partial least squares (PLS) approach is employed with SmartPLS 3.0 to analyze the measurement model. The Descriptive analysis of the research sample is presented in the chapter 5.1 and 5.2. The PLS-SEM approach was applied to the multidimensional statistical evaluation, testing of the hypotheses and creation the final model of the research (Chapter 5.3). The choice of statistical methods is correct and their use is appropriate for verifying research hypotheses.

However above mentioned, I can agree with the limitations of the research stated by the author (Chapter 6.3). Therefore I am still I'm still entitled to express those same comments as I expressed in the dissertation examination 1 year ago.

- The author was supposed to expand his quantitative research and multidimensional statistical evaluation of the research sample also in terms of various categorization variables. These categorization variables, such as region of respondents (high developed, less developed regions), city size of respondents (capital, city, town, village etc.), respondent income, type of college or university by students respondent (technical sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, economics, law, etc.) and many others are also very important factor should be included in a model of social commerce environment. I think that just in these categories may be expected interesting differences and results influencing final alternative models for different groups and categories of Facebook users and customers in the social commerce environment. Therefore I can only agree with the author's statement (see p. 93): "Additionally, this study does not consider the control variables, such as gender and age, which have different influences on eWOM intention (Zhang et al., 2017)."
 - I also recommended that research to be carried out even within another social network (not only by Facebook) in order to be able to compare and take into account some differences in online shopping behaviour by different social networks.
 - Other my recommendation was to extend the research framework by a qualitative research, when the author based on the results of quantitative research proposes a new practical design for selected components within the model of social commerce environment and realises its verifying by customers in Vietnam.
- e) **Theoretical and practical contributions** - I believe that the achieved results are sufficiently significant from the perspective of the e-commerce science and practice. The thesis brings adequate scientific contribution mostly in the area of quantitative research and its key contribution is a theoretical model that explains the background to how the social commerce environment and consumers behaviour works. The issue brings partially also practical economic and social benefits for the selected sectors of the e-commerce and online shopping with specific focus on social commerce environment mostly in Vietnam.
- d) **Formal aspects and correctness of the language** - the thesis is on a very good level of elaboration. Also citations of the literature sources used in the text are correct.

However I have some comments:

- P. 38 - Last paragraph: *This part contains the personal information of the respondents which encompass five items, as shown below.* But up to 8 items are listed here.
 - P. 42 - The formulas listed are not numbered.
 - P. 44 - The space before the title of Chapter 4 is missing.
 - Pp. 61 - 98 - Table 5.1 – 5.5 - The source of data is missing.
- e) **Publications performance of the author** - the author states (pp. 123 - 124) 16 scientific publications, from which 8 in the form of the conference proceedings papers and other 8 publication in WoS or Scopus journals from which 4 articles are even from the category of impact journals registered in WoS. The most articles are also published directly from the field of research. I appreciate very well publishing activities of the author.

Questions for the discussion:

I have the following two questions for the final discussion:

1. The author should explain what are the key differences in online shopping consumer behavior in Vietnam from the perspective of different categories such as age, income size, region, gender etc.?
2. Could the author to present his own opinion among different social networks not only Facebook from the point of view the differences in online shopping consumer behavior? In your opinion, there are some differences in the type of consumers or not?

Final statement and recommendation:

I declare that the submitted Doctoral Thesis meets all requirements and therefore *I recommend it to its final defense.*

After a successful defense *I recommend Mr. Quyen Phu Thi Phan to award* the title "*Ph.D. - Philosophiae Doctor*" in the Study course "*Management and Economics*" /Management a ekonomika/.

Zlín, December 04, 2019



Prof. Ing. Rastislav Rajnoha, Ph.D.

