



Faculty  
of Arts

## Opponent's Review of the Doctoral Thesis

**Candidate:** Nguyen Ngoc Tan, MBA

**Title of the doctoral thesis:** The relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance, mediating role of innovation: the case of public universities in Vietnam

**Opponent:** Assoc. Prof. Jaroslava Kubátová, Ph.D.

The doctoral thesis deals with the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance, taking into account a mediating role of innovation, at public universities in Vietnam. The main aspects of the doctoral thesis are reviewed below.

### **Topicality of the doctoral thesis theme**

The role of knowledge management and innovation in organizational performance has been of high interest for several decades. With the growing importance of knowledge and innovation for the contemporary society and economy, it is worth to conduct research in these areas.

### **Fulfillment of the doctoral thesis objectives**

The candidate set seven research objectives (p.19) and he repeats them in the Conclusion (p. 125).

What, in general, are the links between the objectives and hypotheses?

Can the candidate explain how the fifth objective (to evaluate the extent to which innovation mediates the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance in public university settings in Vietnam) was achieved and interpret the result?

Can the candidate explain how the sixth objective (to develop a toolkit serving as a checklist for HEI if they wish to deploy and gear up KM practices and INNO management to improve OP) was achieved and what the result is?

### **Research methods and procedures**

The candidate presents his research methods and procedures in detail in his doctoral thesis. However, several questions arise and have to be answered.

The candidate developed questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaires were distributed by Directors of Research Management Departments at chosen Universities and about 25 people at every University answered the questionnaires. Hard copies and online versions of the questionnaire were used. How can we rely on the truthfulness of the answers? Who were the 25 people? They were asked for example whether the students are satisfied or whether the staff is happy (with something, see p. 66-67). The profile of the respondent is described in chapter 6.1.2., but it is actually an institution, not the real respondents, i.e. people. The Vietnamese are extremely polite, the concept of face is very important to them. Would they admit that they are not happy or not satisfied? In the qualitative part of the research interviews with university representatives were conducted. The respondents were representatives of the management boards – what was their motivation to answer really truthfully? It is not meant that they tend to lie, but it is necessary to put the research methods into broader cultural context and to discuss its influence on the final results of the research.

### **Results of the doctoral thesis - candidate's concrete contribution**

Four research questions are formulated in chapter 1.4: (1) Is knowledge management a significant predictor of innovation? (2) Is there a positive relationship between innovation and organizational performance? (3) Does positive correlation exist between knowledge management and organizational performance? (4) Does

innovation mediate the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance?

The key findings of the doctoral thesis are presented in chapter 8.2. This chapter is not well structured and the interpretation of the results/findings is very brief if not missing. The same applies to chapter 6.10 and 7.3. Even though a lot of work has been done by the candidate and there are some interesting findings throughout the text, it is difficult to find answers to the research questions.

The candidate should clearly answer the questions during the defense. He also has to explain what does it mean for Vietnamese public Universities that “INNO does not mediate the relationship between KM and OP” (p. 126)? The same for the finding (p. 127) “KM positively influences IT infrastructure and administrative governance of a HEI”.

### **Importance for practice and for the development of the branch of science**

Bringing knowledge management to a higher level is beneficial for any organization. Thus the doctoral thesis may have a practical impact.

A lot was published about knowledge management and innovation in higher education (see for example WoS). But every new piece of knowledge is beneficial. It is necessary to admit that scientific publications are often in English, thus sharing this knowledge in a different language environment may have another positive impact.

### **Formal layout and language level**

The formal layout of the doctoral thesis is quite careful but some parts could have been much better structured, particularly the key findings (or in general the main results of the research.) It is apparent that English is not the first language of the candidate, nevertheless, the text is comprehensible.

### **Candidate's publications**

The list of publications by the candidate include one published journal article coauthored with his supervisor assoc. prof. Gregar, one coauthored journal article

accepted for publication and two articles under reviews. Further the list includes four conference papers.

The doctoral thesis is acceptable for defense.

Following a successful defense of the doctoral thesis I recommend granting the candidate the title Ph.D.

Olomouc, June 3, 2019

