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## OPPONENT'S REVIEW

Doctoral Thesis

**Author:** Elona Cera  
**Title:** "Nurturing inbound open innovation: exploring the interplay of High-Performance Work Systems, Innovative Work Behaviour and Innovative Culture"  
**Degree Program:** Economics and Management

### 1. Topicality of the Doctoral Thesis

Introductory arguments to the selected topics based on the identified research gaps in the "human side of open innovation" explored the core orientation and goals solved in this Doctoral Thesis. The mutual connection between High-Performance Working Systems (HPWS) and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory identified research gaps toward innovative work, culture, and open innovation in the SME industry. The author declares through the relevant literature sources that the identified research gap has a strategic potential for serious research in the selected area. Based on the literature review, the author declares the request for a significant business transformation – from conventional innovation strategies toward cooperation with external knowledge and collaborations among organisations. Factors such as the relationship between HPWS and open innovation, interactive effects of Human Resource Management (HRM) and the required effects of organisational culture on HRM confront the distinctive challenges and opportunities in innovation practices in today's business frameworks with the future competitiveness of SMEs factories. Research findings presented in this Doctoral Thesis declare, by this knowledge, the topicality and scientific progress of the outputs presented in the given research area.

### 2. Fulfilment of the goals set in the Doctoral Thesis

The realised quantitative approach from selected SMEs is based on a relevant literature review presented in Chapter 2. Based on relevant definitions of open innovation, inbound/outbound open innovation declares the author the system-oriented connection of the High-Performance Working Systems and Ability-motivation-opportunity setting. Hypotheses development comes from the definition of innovative work behaviour; all declared hypotheses (H1-H7) directly connect to the goal of scientific research and are supported by a relevant state of knowledge. In Chapter 3, the author presents motivation and the need for study in the given research area. The declaration that HRM plays a significant role in internal organisational performance outcomes and external stakeholders is crucial from the definition of research questions; the

compatibility of the given hypotheses and research questions is an essential element of relevant outputs presented in the dissertation thesis, especially to the fact that the implementation of the high-performance working system is a requirement for organisations that aspire to foster innovation.

The partial research questions and research objectives were defined as relevant to the main goal of the dissertation thesis. They include the HPWS, such as innovative work behaviour and open innovation factors, and the effects and practices of innovative culture as a core assumption of innovative work behaviour. The graphical schema presented in Figure 1 has a logical structure and declares relevant mutual connections between judged factors of influence on the HPWS.

Chapter 4 is oriented on the research methodology, development and validation of a comprehensive model to investigate the efforts of HPWS practices, innovative work behaviour and innovative culture of open innovation in SMEs. The author specified precisely the unit of analysis and utilised the firm-level data to scrutinise the relationships between the variables under investigation. Based on the review of the concepts, the relevant measure metrics were identified as HPWS construct items. Using the SmartPLS 4.0 and PLS techniques, the author defined the structural research model, including the latent variables and their relationships. These data were used in the defined process model to examine the significance of proposed relationships, effects and model performance. All relevant results are summarised in Tables 1-4, with responding comments in Chapter 5.

### 3. The procedure of problem-solving and the results of the Doctoral Thesis

An essential part of problem-solving was the breakdown and discussion of respondent's groups by firm size. Following descriptive statistics of measured constructs provides the author with a complex view of the mutual factors' dependencies in the developed model. A crucial output is quantifying the variables connected with the inbound open innovation. The interactive influences of the proposed conceptual framework are verified by a third set of proposed relationships defined in selected hypotheses. Table 13 brings a structural and logical summarization of the tested hypotheses.

Discussion of the results achieved during the research realised in the framework of dissertation theses brings new knowledge in more areas. Relevant arguments from validation were used for the direct effects of HPWS practices, indirect effects in connection with the mediating effect of innovative work behaviour, and interactive effects. Essential conclusions from this testing and validation were used together with the limitations on the research area, which were dependent on the measurement of the constructs employed and from the SMEs management system. Constataion that "some organisations might be oriented toward innovation" is from the managerial view relative. In contrast, "others are focused on cost reduction", the human resources strategy definition may be, for some SMEs, a radical process content declaration. Still, from the innovation strategy point of view, human strategy management should be concentrated on continuous process management in the form of innovative process thinking.

### 4. Significance for practice and science

The dissertation thesis brings some exciting points according to practice and science. Firstly, they explore the role of HPWS on SMEs, realised research declares the direct effects of HPWS and innovative work behaviour. From a practical point of view, this fact influences the decisions in manufacturing companies regarding human ability and motivation. Secondly, the results show no significant effect between ability-enhancing and motivation-enhancing knowledge.

This opens the space for more companies toward the structural thinking about human motivation frameworks oriented on open innovations.

Scientific contribution is represented by serious scientific discussion and verification of the given hypothesis and research question. A relevant research gap was identified, and crucial results toward implementing Ability-Motivation-Opportunity and connectivity with High-Performance Working Systems were declared. The results presented in the dissertation thesis showed the critical importance of both concepts in the SMEs sector. Still, it's essential to consider the SME's specifications in several declared areas.

#### 5. Formal status of Doctoral Thesis

The doctoral thesis is processed well, the text is logical, and the tables and pictures are understandable. The cited literary sources have a thematic connection with the addressed topic of the dissertation.


#### 6. Publication activity of the student

The list of student publications is thematically connected with the content of the doctoral thesis. It includes the scientific papers registered by Web of Science and Scopus, and more papers were presented at scientific events. All papers are co-authored with other scientists (declaration of relevant scientific teamwork of the student).

### CONCLUSION

I **recommend** the doctoral thesis "Nurturing inbound open innovation: exploring the interplay of High-Performance Work Systems, Innovative Work Behaviour and Innovative Culture" of student Elona Cera to the defence. After a successful defence, I recommend conferring a Ph.D. degree.

In Zlín, 4<sup>th</sup> Juni 2024



#### Questions:

1. Can you give some examples of actual High-Performance Work Systems used in SMEs (in the world)? Which type of innovation is crucial in this system for SME practice?
2. Based on the Industry 4.0 concept, the conclusions of the doctoral research are available promptly for use in SMEs or should be modified – if yes, in which factors or parameters?

