

Doctoral thesis review

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Title: **Corporate social responsibility as an intangible asset in the airline industry in Central and Eastern Europe**

The doctoral thesis deals with a very important and up-to-day topic – corporate social responsibility. But more of that – the author applies the topic to airline industry, which is a good attempt not only for this particular activity (airlines), but also as an inspiration for other authors how to apply the theoretical concept in practice. The author seems to be very well acquainted to theory of CSR, but also to practice in the airline industry.

The author states that the main objective of the research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of CSR as an intangible asset in the airline industry in Central and Eastern Europe, and then he gives six research questions that serve as the basis for research. The research questions deal with benefits of CSR, perception of customers, employees and managers of CSR, and the effect of CSR on reputation and financial performance of airlines. Research questions are adequate to research objective.

Methodology of research is based on multiple case study approach, uses qualitative and quantitative research coming from questionnaires, and then regression and correlation analysis. For quantitative research it could be useful to have hypotheses, but they cannot be found in the dissertation. Also the main objective is focused only on research, and is not applied to the whole dissertation – it is a pity, because the author then relatively successfully fulfils wider objective. He worked out all the necessary aspects of his main research objective, but more of that, he also showed the contribution of dissertation to theory and practice. So I can say he fulfils the objective.

The dissertation starts with a profound critical analysis of available literature of all concerned topics – corporate social responsibility, intangible assets, and stakeholder theory. Then the author explains in detail his research methodology and analysis of the data. He uses statistical methods for evaluating the data and links among them, and then he comes to adequate conclusions that can be exploited also in other fields of economic activity.

As for the methodology of the research – he used questionnaires for customers, employees, and managers (164 persons in total). It could be interesting what the way of choosing such sample of respondents was. He analysed airlines in Central and Eastern Europe, but it could be useful to know which airlines. Then it could be a topic for discussion to explain how he worked with those financial characteristics as ROA, ROE etc. Is it possible to create overall indicators from financial performance of different firms?

The process of analysing the data and making conclusions is based on a very good knowledge of the topic, and the author shows he is able to apply theory to practice. The contribution to the theory is not only the matter of CSR itself, but also of firms' behaviour and business administration, and of strategic management, too. The dissertation is very inspiring for firms in other fields, because it gives the instrument how to deal with CSR. It can also be useful for students of economic disciplines to get deep knowledge of the concept. The contribution of the author is clear and without discussion, because he took the concept of CSR, and applied it to airline industry, where such work did not exist till that time.

The formal requirements are satisfied in dissertation,, the language is adequate, logic, understandable and without grammar shortcomings. Tables and pictures are functional and formally correct. The list of literature is harmony with bibliographic norm.

The publication activity of the author is satisfactory, it meets requirements

The dissertation fulfils all aspects of such works, and so I recommend it in to defence, and after successful defence I recommend to give the author the title Ph.D.

In the discussion the following question:

In your work you say that the customers have differences in lack understanding the content and importance of CSR. Can you say where you see reason for lack of understanding. Do you think that the reason for lack of understanding is the absence of ethics in practical management ?

In Hradec Králové, September 21st , 2015



doc Ing Zdenek Dytrt CSc