

Wroclaw, June 5, 2023

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**Review of the doctoral thesis of Yusheng Fu, MSc, entitled
"Effects of corporate volunteering on employee behaviours" written at the Nicolaus
Copernicus University at the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management
under the supervision of Prof. dr hab. Aldona Glińska-Noweś
with the support of co-supervisor dr Andre Soares**

Formal background

The review of Yusheng Fu's PhD thesis has been assigned to me by the decision of the Council of the Scientific Discipline of Management Science and Quality of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń at a session of the Council held on May 17, 2023.

The review refers to the PhD thesis written in English consisting of – including introduction, four chapters, references, lists of tables and figures, and an appendix – 131 pages. The dissertation contains all the necessary elements of a doctoral thesis, while its merit, methodological, language and editorial facets enable it to be assessed.

The review was prepared according to the requirements included in the Act of July 20, 2018 Law on higher education and science (Dz. U. z 2018 r. poz. 1668 ze zm.), which states specifically that *"The doctoral dissertation presents the candidate's general theoretical knowledge in a discipline or disciplines and the ability to conduct scientific or artistic work independently"* (art. 187, ust. 1) and *"The subject of a doctoral dissertation is an original solution to a scientific problem, an original solution in the application of the results of one's own"* (art. 187, ust. 2).



General insights

The dissertation was authored by Mr Yusheng Fu and was written under the supervision of Prof. Aldona Glińska-Noweś with the support of co-supervisor dr Andre Soares. The thesis locates in the field of management and quality sciences, including mainly the cognitive areas of organizational behaviours and corporate social responsibility. Given the systematization of the discipline of management and quality sciences developed by the Committee of Organisation and Management Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences¹, the dissertation taps into the theoretical stream of Organisation and Management Theory and the practical stream of organizational behaviours considered at the operational level of management but also the management of for-profit organizations considered in terms of the explored type of organizations.

In the thesis, the main focus is given to corporate volunteering (CV) and its role in two phenomena, namely affective commitment (AC) and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB). Given my knowledge, the area investigated in the dissertation is not only attractive and interesting (as volunteering and social impacts gain interest in both theory and practice) but also up-to-date (due to the incomplete and just recently built a stock of empirical knowledge) as well as relevant in terms of popularization of advanced research methods (i.e., meta-analysis and PLS-SEM).

Moreover, it should be noted that the investigation of the connections between the above theoretical constructs (i.e., CV, AC, and OCB) is taken adequately across the dissertation. The doctoral Student aptly identified the research gap concerning the lack of recognition of the impacting role of CV either on affective commitment or organizational citizenship behaviours; designed and conducted a three-step research process (desk research: meta-analysis; field research #1: structural equation modelling focused on AC; field research #2: structural equation modelling focused on OCB); analyzed the gathered data (what is important to highlight - the core analyses were preceded by the preliminary data processing and validation which is usually over missed); drew accurate conclusions, show the concrete contribution of the research process to managerial theory and practice. Because of the above and considering the following specific remarks, the reviewed work is assessed positively and may become the basis for admitting Mr Yusheng Fu, MSc, to the public defence of His doctoral thesis. It is so, as

¹ Source: https://knoiz.pan.pl/images/stories/pliki/pdf/Subdyscypliny_nauk_o_zarzdaniu_i_jakoci.pdf, May 21, 2023.

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the thesis proves the candidate's theoretical knowledge in the field of management and quality sciences, His ability to efficiently carry out scientific research independently while the contribution and the solution of the scientific problem of the thesis are original and valuable.

Specific comments and evaluation

Introduction

In the introduction, all relevant information is provided, namely, the cognitive gaps are identified (e.g. the outcomes of CV considered at the individual level), the need for their filling in is presented (e.g. contradictory claims in the existing literature on the CV effects), the research problem and main goal of the thesis are given, core definitions and conceptualizations are presented (e.g. corporate volunteering, CSR, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour), characteristics of empirical investigation (incl. desk research on the literature and field research conducted in two stages), the main contributions to the theory and society (e.g. promotion of CV) are outlined.

On page 4, the Author states, "*The outcome of corporate volunteering is the main problem analyzed in this study*". Given the additional information and argumentation provided in the introduction, I see the scientific problem and its solution as original and valuable in terms of cumulative knowledge creation in the management and quality sciences. In my opinion, however, it would be good to formulate the scientific problem in a more detailed way to highlight its novelty and relevance clearly.

The main aim was formulated as follows "*The purpose of this thesis is to explore and explain the mechanisms by which corporate volunteering influences organizational commitment (OC) and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) of employees participating in the volunteering*" (p. 5). It should be noted that the empirical investigation focuses on affective commitment being a component/dimension of organizational commitment. Thus the current form of the aim seems to be a bit too broad and might be seen as slightly misleading. Moreover, the tested models prove the moderation role of CV, not its direct impact, as suggested in the goal mentioned above and other thesis assumptions. In my opinion, it would be good to clearly indicate the focus on moderating effect or (at least to) emphasize that the indirect effect is investigated in the field research. I should be noticed, however, that although I see the above issue as a shortcoming, the research (both desk and field one) is carried out at a high level of standards, effectively addresses the target cognitive gaps, and provides a

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relevant contribution to theory, but also to methodology (i.e., as it promotes the utilization of meta-analysis in management science).

Chapter 1

The first chapter starts with a screening and comparing different CV definitions. Mr Fu analyses and compares a wide range of definitions; it would be nice, however, to analyze the definitions a little bit more deeply. In this part of the thesis, I do appreciate the exemplification of the definitions and their components with examples from practice. On the one hand, it proves the reliable understanding of the analyzed concept. On the other, it shows a broad recognition of CV in both management literature and managerial practice. When it comes to the definition analysis, I miss a clear statement about the finally adopted conceptualization and definition applied in further research stages.

The second section of Chapter 1 focuses on CV antecedents, which are considered and discussed at three levels employee / workplace / organization. It should be emphasized that the Author, even though in the empirical part, decided – reasonably – to focus on the individual level only here discusses different levels. It proves His comprehensive approach. Regarding the antecedents, I was wondering if they are interlinked or if it is possible to organize them in a hierarchical order in terms of relevance for CV as this issue is not considered at all.

The next part takes the opposite “*side*” of CV, namely its outcomes. As in the case of antecedents, different levels of outcomes are discussed, namely employee and organization-related ones. This part is relatively short and could be more inquiring.

The following part concentrates on affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviours considered as the outcomes of CV. I do appreciate the sound reasoning of the intentional focus on these two CV effects, which one may find at the beginning of this part. To explore and justify AC and OCB as outcomes of CV meta-analysis of the literature was carried out.

Regarding the adopted methodological approach, I would like to highlight some essential distinguishing issues which, in my opinion, should be seen as significant strengths of the thesis: (1) meta-analysis is rarely used in doctoral theses in management science, (2) literature review meets not only general criteria of systematic literature review but also follows (what is unusual) PRISMA protocol, (3) next to classically used academic databases, Google Scholar was used to collect the relevant works.

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In general, I would like to note that the application of meta-analysis of prior empirical research linking the considered variables (i.e., CV, AC, and OCB) is scarce at the level of doctoral theses, primarily if meta-analysis is used not as a leading research method but as a preliminary stage proceeding the main analytical investigation. I appreciate Mr Fu's methodological choice at this stage of the research process.

Chapters 2 and 3

The second and third chapters focus on affective commitment (chapter 2) and organizational citizenship behaviours (chapter 3) considered in the context of being influenced by corporate volunteering. Structurally those chapters look like typical scientific articles as each starts with theoretical background, focuses on hypotheses development linked with AC (chapter 2) or OCB (chapter 3), characterizes methodological issues, presents the results of data analysis and provides comments on them.

In the beginning, the main theoretical construct is presented – either affective commitment (chapter 2) or organizational citizenship behaviour (chapter 3) – in the context of its connection with the variables used as independent in the research model – in total, 11 hypotheses were developed including 6 in Study 1 focused on AC and 5 in Study 2 focused on OCB. It is worth noting that the Author effectively uses the recent and seminal literature to characterize AC and OCB. I see it as an advantage allowing exploring the constructs in-depth.

Later on, the hypotheses are developed. On the one hand, the literature and theoretical support for the developed hypotheses should be broader and deeper as the number of works used seems to be not such high. On the other hand, however, every single part focuses on one specific dyadic interlink (i.e., leads to the development of one specific hypothesis), thus when taken together, the entire models and hypotheses inside are reasonably and convincingly presented using appropriate literature.

My biggest concern refers to how the considered variables are linked in particular hypotheses and inside the research model. The aim of the thesis and the line of argumentation in the theoretical part suggest that CV will be investigated as directly impacting AC in chapter 2 and OCB in chapter 3. At the same time, the hypotheses developed (reasonably based on the literature analysis) consider the perceived supervisor support, positive relationship at work, and job satisfaction as directly influencing AC (and OCB in chapter 3), while CV as additional and indirect factor. As I mentioned in the general comments provided above, as the

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hypotheses development is sound and rigorous and the models tested are justified and valid, it would be recommended to re-formulate the main goal and the narration in the first chapter to clearly show that the focus is not given to the direct – but to the indirect – impact of CV.

In the following part, the methodological design is presented. In both cases, PLS-SEM was chosen as a method of model testing. The choice is reasonable as both Studies 1 and 2 focus on latent constructs, and the sample size suits variance-based partial least squares SEM. I appreciate that Author decided to use the measurement scales already available in the literature, as it would be useless to reinvent the wheel and develop new scales. It should be highlighted that all scales were tested regarding their quality by the application of CFA, scale validity measures (including AVE, CR) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha, CMB). The scales were found to be reliable and valid. The validation of scales remains rarely tested, and therefore it should be seen as one of the methodological strengths of the thesis.

In the further part, the detailed research models – either focused on AC in Chapter 2 or on OCB in Chapter 3 – are tested. The results are appropriately presented and are valid in terms of statistical significance. Surprisingly, not all of the hypotheses found support in the data analyzed.

The last part of every empirical chapter provides the comments on the results and discusses them in the context of the existing literature. It should be appreciated that besides interpretation and discussion, one can find straightforward and reliable descriptions of theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and future research directions. It proves the relevance of the conducted research as well as the research awareness of the Author.

As the most valuable achievements in the empirical chapters, I see the following ones: (1) consideration of both mediating and moderating variables, what made it possible to investigate complex relationships among the variables; (2) validation of the scales used; (3) empirical support for the impacting role of perceived supervisor support and positive relationship at work for AC, mediation effect of job satisfaction on AC, impacting the role of positive relationship at work for OCB; (4) revealing job satisfaction as an insignificant mediator for OCB as well as perceived supervisor support as an insignificant driver of OCB; (5) cumulative development of our knowledge – mainly through empirical verification of theoretical claims – on organizational behaviour and CSR in the following concepts corporate

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volunteering, organizational commitment (here the focus on affective dimension), and organizational citizenship behaviours.

Chapter 4

The last chapter presents general comments and summarises the results in the context of achieving the research assumptions. The very positive general conclusion drawn based on the results of the analytical investigation is that empirical data confirm that corporate volunteering is beneficial in terms of its positive (indirect) impacts on both the employees' affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviours. Nevertheless, the impacts on AC do not significantly differ between employees engaged and not engaged in CV.

Surprisingly, as contradictory to some past research, the results of Study 1 gave ground for in-depth and valuable interpretation and explanations showing – supportively to the more general literature – that gender ought to be considered a high differentiation factor when investigating corporate volunteering and related issues. Regarding the impacts on OCB (Study 2; Chapter 3) the research supports the existing literature as it shown that corporate volunteers are more likely to engage in OCB when they recognize positive relationships at the workplace.

Given the content of the last chapter, I would suggest changing its title as it summarizes the results and provides general comments on them. A very rational discussion of the obtained results is given in the last sections of Chapters 2 and 3, so although it is reasoned not to duplicate the discussion in Chapter 4, its title should not necessarily include the word "*discussion*".

Summary of the thesis

The dissertation taps into the field of organizational behaviours considered under the management and quality sciences. Doctoral Student, Mr Yusheng, has accurately identified a significant and up-to-date research gap, which - although the aim of the thesis should clearly point at the specificity of the considered impact of CV on both AC and OCB - He fills based on the results of independently and correctly conducted desk and field research.

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Structure

PhD thesis takes a traditional and appropriate structure covering – in chronological order – an introduction, four chapters (including one entirely theoretical, two mixed, i.e. theory combined with methodological design and empirical findings, and one presenting general conclusions), a list of references, a list of tables, a list of figures, and appendix. Appropriate structurization of the dissertation allowed the Author to present considerations logically and cumulatively. In total, the work has 131 pages in length and even though it is not very long it is concrete and very informative.

Literature

The thesis was prepared using 470 works, mainly articles published in international and very reputable journals. The type and scope of the literature suit the area of investigation; naturally, the works from the field of organizational behaviour dominate.

It should be mentioned that the Author smoothly combined the recent publications with seminal studies from the field of management, organizational behaviours, and research methodology. It proves that He attempted to identify the theoretical underpinnings of the phenomena under study deeply.

Narration style

The work is well-written, using appropriate terminology, narration style, and interdisciplinary perspective. What is worth highlighting, the storyline is transparent and smooth. It is not only cognitively valuable but also pleasant to read.

Given the future works potentially prepared by the Author (including monographs to the greatest extent), I recommend considering including graphical forms like tables, schemas, infographics, figures, etc. Basically, in the theoretical and concluding parts, it would be good to find some tables or figures summarizing, integrating, confronting, etc., the presented deliberations. On the one hand, it makes the content more “*reader-friendly*”. On the other hand, it may prove such relevant research skills as the ability to synthesize or critically think and analyze.

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Editorial issues

The dissertation is generally written thoroughly. Minor errors such as useless spaces, empty lines (or even pages in the beginning), typos, missing commas or other editorial inaccuracies (e.g. the missing word "testing" in the sentence on page 7 "These include the process of data collection, the respondent characteristics, related measures and the results of hypotheses."; some acronyms, e.g. CSR, SDT, OCB, are explained more than once) are pretty rare and do not affect the perception of the substantive content of the work.

Concluding remark

The reviewed doctoral dissertation meets the requirements set out in Article 187 of the Act of July 20 2018 Law on higher education and science (Dz. U. z 2018 r. poz. 1668 z późn. zm.), i.e. it constitutes an original scientific problem and successfully and accurately solves it by the application of appropriate research methods. Moreover, the content and quality of the reviewed dissertation demonstrate the Doctoral Student's general theoretical knowledge, His ability to conduct scientific research and report the results of this research.

In conclusion, taking into consideration the accuracy of the identification of the research gap and the selection of the research methodology, the design of the multi-stage research process, sufficient recognition and analysis of literature, the ability to conduct field research and to analyze the collected data, I request that the Doctoral Student be admitted to the public defence.

Konkluzja

Recenzowana rozprawa doktorska spełnia wymagania określone w art. 187 ustawy z dnia 20 lipca 2018 r. Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce (Dz. U. z 2018 r. poz. 1668 z późn. zm.), tj. stawia oryginalny problem naukowy oraz w sposób udany i trafny rozwiązuje go przez zastosowanie właściwych i aktualnych metod badawczych. Ponadto treść i jakość recenzowanej rozprawy świadczą o ogólnej wiedzy teoretycznej Doktoranta, Jego umiejętności prowadzenia badań naukowych i raportowania wyników tych badań.

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Reasumując, biorąc pod uwagę trafność identyfikacji luki badawczej i dobór metodologii badań, zaprojektowanie wieloetapowego procesu badawczego, dostateczne rozpoznanie i analizę literatury, umiejętność prowadzenia badań terenowych oraz analizy zebranych danych, wnoszę o dopuszczenie Doktoranta do publicznej obrony.

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