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Review
of the doctoral dissertation of mgr Solomon Kunle OMOGBEMI entitled
Organisational Image and Stakeholder Engagement: Exploring Social
Responsibility
as a Driver of Competitive Advantage of a University
Supervisor: prof. Akademii WSB, dr hab. Katarzyna Szczepańska-Woszczyna

This review has been produced in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Polish Law of 20 July 2018 on Higher Education, Research, and Science (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 478, as amended).

This review has been carried out according to the following criteria:

- a. composition of the dissertation, content structure, and compliance with formal requirements;
- b. justification of the research issue selected;
- c. evaluation of the subject-matter content and academic value;
- d. own research carried out;
- e. selection and use of academic sources;
- f. practical implications and specification of the directions of further research.

Re: A

The doctoral dissertation submitted by mgr Solomon Kunle OMOGBEMI for review, ***Organisational Image and Stakeholder Engagement: Exploring Social Responsibility as a Driver of Competitive Advantage of a University***, comprises five thematically separate chapters whose titles clearly indicate the intention of the particular portions in relation to the dissertation as a whole.

The dissertation has 377 pages, including annexes. The structure of the dissertation is logical and cohesive, raising no reservations. Drawings, tables, charts, and diagrams are correctly labeled and their lists are attached at the end of the dissertation. The language and the style of dissertation raise no reservations.

The clear language and the subject-matter content are of value for the reader. The disquisition has a logical structure and allows the reader to make references to original works.

One of the assets of the dissertation is the author's mastery in terms of academic writing and his use of a fully professional and lucid language, which, in my opinion,

qualifies the dissertation for sharing with a wide range of readers. This constitutes added value in the general process of doctoral students disseminating the results of their studies and research.

In the dissertation, the author focuses on how social responsibility initiatives impact university image, stakeholder engagement, and competitive positioning, offering theoretically significant and practically applicable insights for university administrators and policymakers. The doctoral student concentrates on corporate social responsibility (CSR), which should be primarily utilized as a strategic tool for constructing and promoting an organization's image, makes meticulous references to other academic publications, and takes care of both the academic accuracy and the implicative value of the material presented.

The author also made sure that the entire dissertation is grammatically and stylistically correct.

The doctoral student has properly planned the introductory part, presented the theoretical background, reviewed the existing research, and discussed the results of his own research, maintaining a good balance between these elements. The issues covered by the individual chapters have been selected on the basis of subject-matter literature, the research carried out by the doctoral student, and a review of the research done in Poland and abroad.

The presentation and discussion of the results contain references to interesting practical implications, which form a bridge for an introduction of subject-matter literature and its analysis. The author accurately divided the summary of his dissertation into sections, describing the issues related to the development of theory in the academic discipline in question, the practical implications, and the contribution to the management practice; he also outlined the limitations and directions in terms of further research.

The discussion of the results is based on the data collected. The doctoral student described the problem, referring to subject-matter literature related to broadly understood reinforcing of resourcefulness and perception of one's own employability, utilizing both what is called the key publications in the academic discipline of management and quality science and academic sources from other, related disciplines in which analyses in terms of corporate social responsibility are carried out.

The doctoral student used not only current and recognized literature on the subject, but also textbooks, thematic documents, reports, and—which is especially valuable—his own experiences, which makes the dissertation an accurate and credible work.

In my opinion, and this will be referred to further on in this review, the following are missing:

1. a reference to the context of the current stage of technological and social development. The fourth industrial revolution has changed the face of analog CSR initiatives, and the three key transitions (energy, digital, and space) have initiated completely new directions for CSR manifestations and social needs, resulting from changes in all three areas of human activity: work, education, and free time.

In this context, we talk about completely new trends in terms of CSR that utilize technology 4.0 and the way in which society 5.0 functions, not only in social media or in organic or non-organic teams, but in a completely different, new reality—a space that is not analog, but digital—and just as important for CSR practices;

2. a reference to the differentiation between the strongly varied needs of the particular social groups that are the key stakeholders of universities—societies which, for instance due to different time frames of functioning, are divided according to various typologies (such as the highly popular division into generations) since their values, opinions, needs, and styles of functioning are too different to treat them all as a single category. Even though the doctoral student did make a reference to the current expectation that universities should adopt comprehensive and evidence-based strategies that support the well-being of students and prevent a burgeoning crisis, dividing these strategies into five key areas (enhancing access to mental health services, promoting work-life balance and mental health education, implementing preventive and proactive measures, combating mental health stigma, and alleviating financial and academic stressors), this, in my opinion, is insufficient;
3. a greater synthesis of the materials collected, both in the theoretical and the empirical section. The ability to synthesize is one of the major skills when it comes to data collection, especially considering that the doctoral student has demonstrated the ability to use tables, figures, diagrams, etc., which significantly facilitate the analysis of the material. Even though the doctoral student has exercised the required diligence in the subsections of the individual chapters, a certain text overload is noticeable; in my opinion, some trimming in this respect would be advisable;
4. a retest and a longitudinal study, especially that the doctoral student has strong ties to the WSB University, which would make it a fairly easy undertaking over the course of several years. Investigating the impact of CSR in time would allow for determining whether these initiatives create a lasting competitive edge;

5. more precise ratios for measuring the academic and ethical aspects of CSR, which would allow for a better understanding of how stakeholders define the value of CSR in the context of higher education.

Recapitulating, in spite of the comments made in sections 1–5, my opinion on the composition of the dissertation, the structure of its content, and compliance with formal requirements is positive.

Re: B

The dissertation submitted for review focuses on current and important problems, exploring how social responsibility initiatives impact university image, stakeholder engagement, and competitive positioning, offering theoretically significant and practically applicable insights for university administrators and policymakers, especially that—as mentioned above—corporate social responsibility (CSR) is primarily utilized as a strategic tool for constructing and promoting an organization's image .

The concept of CSR in universities is a highly important topic, often termed University Social Responsibility (USR), and the fact that it is distinguished as a separate notion, both among theoreticians and practitioners, shows that this dissertation is dedicated to a significant issue. USR encompasses a range of activities, including community engagement, ethical governance, environmental stewardship, taking care of our planet, and supporting innovation and technological and social progress. CSR in higher education institutions has gained prominence as stakeholders—students, faculty, alumni, and community members—increasingly expect universities to demonstrate accountability beyond academic performance and beyond activities in terms of research, teaching, and organization. Universities that embrace CSR are perceived as more ethical and responsible, which can enhance their image and attract a diverse, engaged community of learners and contributors. Global trends emphasizing sustainable development and ethical leadership reinforce the importance of CSR in universities.

Considering the doctoral student's review of the theory and the existing research concerning the role of social responsibility initiatives on university image, stakeholder engagement, and competitive positioning, the justification of the selected research problem is convincing.

The dissertation attempts to expand the scope of knowledge concerning the concept of CSR and to add new elements to the global literature in terms of understanding CSR activities and identifying the best managerial practices. The doctoral student aptly demonstrated that despite the acknowledged value of CSR in shaping corporate reputation, there is a gap in understanding its specific implications for universities. While studies have investigated CSR's impact on

corporate image and consumer trust, the doctoral student pointed out the need to examine how similar principles influence stakeholder perceptions within academic institutions. The doctoral student emphasized that the existing literature provides limited insights into how universities can leverage CSR to enhance their public image and effectively engage diverse stakeholder groups. He also stated that the dissertation addressed these gaps by examining how CSR initiatives affect university image, stakeholder loyalty, and competitive advantage. The doctoral student focused on primary objectives, which were to define the concept of social responsibility as it applies to higher education, explore the impact of CSR initiatives on university operations and stakeholder relationships, including trust, satisfaction, and perceived value of the university's social responsibility initiatives, and analyze the role of CSR in enhancing the university's image and competitive positioning.

Recapitulating, my opinion on the selection of the research problem is positive, including in view of the resulting implications for management practice.

Re: C

My opinion of the theoretical section of the dissertation is also positive. The doctoral student preserved the interdisciplinary nature of the issue of corporate social responsibility. He meticulously presented the differences in terms of the theoretical and the empirical approach to this phenomenon. The dissertation is a successful attempt at presenting the diverse nature of the object of research. The author presents the individual issues, gradually introducing the reader to notions that smoothly follow from each other, and analyzes them very thoroughly.

The choice of the research sample in the context of the socio-economic and developmental changes referred to in the dissertation is fully justified.

The doctoral student has carried out a solid analysis of the following issues, in accordance with the structure of the table of contents of the dissertation. The dissertation is organized into five chapters: In the theoretical section, in chapter one (Introduction), the author outlined the research's background, problem statement, objectives, theoretical framework, and significance, setting the stage for an in-depth exploration of CSR in universities.

In chapter two, he carried out a literature review. The chapter reviews the existing literature on CSR, stakeholder theory, and university branding, identifying gaps and establishing a foundation for the research questions and hypotheses.

The other chapters of the dissertation are reviewed by me in the section concerning research methodology, in accordance with the structure of this review.

An extensive analysis of literature that defines the problem of corporate social responsibility is one of the assets of the dissertation.

Concluding this section of the review, it should be pointed out that the doctoral student has demonstrated strong skills in terms of producing a synthesis of the theoretical background in the form of legible tables and other graphic forms of presenting the problems discussed. These tables and figures are especially valuable, presenting aggregated data.

Re: D

My opinion of the empirical section of the dissertation is also positive. The attempt to answer the research questions has been successful. The dissertation remains within the academic discipline of psychology and the research issue has been correctly defined by the doctoral student. The empirical section of the dissertation begins with chapter three, in which the doctoral student describes his methodological research concept. This chapter details the study's research design, data collection methods, and sampling techniques, justifying the choice of a mixed-methods approach and describing the strategies used to ensure data validity and reliability.

In chapter four, the doctoral student has analyzed data and research results. This chapter presents and interprets quantitative and qualitative findings, highlighting the relationship between CSR practices and university image and the nuanced perspectives of different stakeholder groups.

Chapter five is dedicated to conclusions and recommendations. This final chapter summarizes the key contributions, provides practical recommendations for enhancing CSR in universities, suggests avenues for future research, and reflects on the broader implications of the study for higher education.

The dissertation employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative case studies to comprehensively understand CSR's impact on university image and stakeholder perceptions. Surveys were distributed to students, faculty, and community members, providing quantifiable data on how CSR initiatives influence their views on university ethics, sustainability, and social impact. Additionally, case studies of selected universities offered qualitative insights into the strategies, motivations, and challenges associated with implementing CSR initiatives. This methodological approach allows for triangulation, enhancing the study's validity by cross-referencing quantitative findings with qualitative narratives.

The doctoral student emphasized the significance of this research that lies in its potential to bridge the gap between CSR theory and its practical application in higher education. As universities navigate an increasingly competitive and globalized environment, CSR emerges as a powerful tool for enhancing institutional image, fostering stakeholder loyalty, and differentiating universities in the

marketplace By analyzing the effectiveness of CSR initiatives in universities, the doctoral student also emphasized that this study contributes to academic theory and practical knowledge, offering actionable insights for university leaders and policymakers. The findings suggest pathways for universities to create socially responsible identities that resonate with diverse stakeholder groups, ultimately supporting a more sustainable and ethically conscious higher education sector.

In the dissertation, proper research methodology was adopted and the correct research tools were selected, in line with the assumptions and the object of research.

The doctoral student formulated the following research questions: How do university social responsibility initiatives affect the public perception and the image of the institution? What are the opinions of key stakeholders on the effectiveness and importance of CSR activities? How do CSR activities affect the competitive position of a university in the higher education sector?

In my opinion, both in the theoretical and the empirical sections of the dissertation, the following are missing, as indicated above:

1. a reference to the context of the current stage of technological and social development. The fourth industrial revolution has changed the face of analog CSR initiatives, and the three key transitions (energy, digital, and space) have initiated completely new directions for CSR manifestations and social needs, resulting from changes in all three areas of human activity: work, education, and free time.

In this context, we talk about completely new trends in terms of CSR that utilize technology 4.0 and the way in which society 5.0 functions, not only in social media or in organic or non-organic teams, but in a completely different, new reality—a space that is not analog, but digital—and just as important for CSR practices;

2. a reference to the differentiation between the strongly varied needs of the particular social groups that are the key stakeholders of universities—societies which, for instance due to different time frames of functioning, are divided according to various typologies (such as the highly popular division into generations) since their values, opinions, needs, and styles of functioning are too different to treat them all as a single category. Even though the doctoral student did make a reference to the current expectation that universities should adopt comprehensive and evidence-based strategies that support the well-being of students and prevent a burgeoning crisis, dividing these strategies into five key areas (enhancing access to mental health services, promoting work-life balance and mental health education, implementing preventive and proactive measures, combating mental health

stigma, and alleviating financial and academic stressors), this, in my opinion, is insufficient;

3. a greater synthesis of the materials collected, both in the theoretical and the empirical section. The ability to synthesize is one of the major skills when it comes to data collection, especially considering that the doctoral student has demonstrated the ability to use tables, figures, diagrams, etc., which significantly facilitate the analysis of the material. Even though the doctoral student has exercised the required diligence in the subsections of the individual chapters, a certain text overload is noticeable; in my opinion, a more synthetic approach in this respect would be advisable;
4. a retest and a longitudinal study, especially that the doctoral student has strong ties to the WSB University, which would make it a fairly easy undertaking. Investigating the impact of CSR in time would allow for determining whether these initiatives create a lasting competitive edge;
5. more precise ratios for measuring the academic and ethical aspects of CSR, which would allow for a better understanding of how stakeholders define the value of CSR in the context of higher education.

The doctoral student has carried out the research process correctly, choosing the appropriate research tools and properly dividing it into stages and tasks. He has also demonstrated the required skills in terms of academic analysis, the design and carrying out of own research, and thoroughness of theoretical inquiry, as well as the accuracy of the entire research process and the interpretation of results, including the specification of their practical applications.

The findings from the doctoral student's research reveal significant trends regarding how social responsibility initiatives impact the public perception and competitive stance of universities. Firstly, results indicate that social responsibility initiatives positively influence public perception, particularly among younger stakeholders and academic staff, who value ethical leadership and environmental sustainability in higher education. Most survey respondents strongly agreed that CSR enhances the university's role in the community, fostering loyalty and a positive institutional image.

Secondly, based on the results, a positive correlation was found between the integration of CSR in university strategy and perceived competitive advantage. Universities with distinct, visible CSR programs reported higher satisfaction among stakeholders, improved engagement, and increased likelihood of stakeholder loyalty, all supporting competitive positioning.

Thirdly, analysis by demographic category highlighted diverse perceptions of CSR based on age, gender, and position within the university. For instance, academic staff and female respondents generally agreed on the importance of transparent CSR

practices. This underscores the significance of tailoring CSR strategies to meet the expectations of different stakeholder groups.

Fourthly, the analysis of selected universities demonstrated that institutions with structured CSR initiatives consistently recorded stronger public support and positive reputational outcomes than institutions with a minimal CSR focus. Additionally, universities that integrated CSR into their curricula and community outreach programs experienced increased stakeholder engagement and an enhanced public image.

The doctoral student is aware of the innovative nature of his dissertation, which he openly states, making it easier for the reviewer to refer to this element.

Re: E

The dissertation has been written diligently and is correct from the point of view of presenting the literature used. The doctoral student is able to make references to other academic publications, quote them, and use the works of others. The list of references is extremely rich and arranged according to the following structure: articles, non-periodic publications, reports, strategies and standards, legal acts, online sources.

Of note is not only the number of materials used, but also their quality. A large number of the articles were written in English and published in high-scoring journals.

The doctoral student makes appropriate references to subject-matter literature, making use of both the key publications in the academic discipline of psychology and new academic descriptions from the interdisciplinary area investigated by him. It should be emphasized that the doctoral student used not only current and recognized literature on the subject, but also textbooks, thematic documents available online, and—which is especially valuable—his own experiences, which makes the dissertation an accurate and credible work.

Both the quantity and the quality of the publications, the method of their selection, and the structure of their division confirm the doctoral student's ability to analyze the available literature and carry out an in-depth analysis of the subject of the dissertation. The selection of literature is significantly above the average, appropriate to the research, and fully sufficient, which is reflected in precise drawing of conclusions, the quality of the synthesis, and the interpretation of research results.

Re: F

The dissertation is an example of a solid description of the investigation carried out, including in terms of practical implications and an active search for remedial

measures, boldly presenting improvement proposals. It is a successful attempt at pointing out the directions for the development of CSR activities.

The dissertation covers issues that are current and significant from the point of view of the relevant academic discipline, has significant research value, and contributes to the development of neighboring academic disciplines. The way in which the doctoral student presents his deliberations is highly inspiring for readers of various levels of knowledge. In my opinion, of note are the doctoral student's recommendations concerning further research, including intercultural research, in order to verify the results in various cultural contexts. This future research could investigate the perception of CSR in universities across the world, analyzing whether a similar impact of CSR on public image and stakeholder loyalty exists in other cultural environments.

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student has achieved a high level of methodological maturity in a relatively new area that he has decided to explore.

Recapitulating, I am convinced that the dissertation submitted to me for review is a product of a mature reflection and an innovative approach to the current problems in the area of corporate social responsibility activities, and constitutes an original work.

The dissertation has been produced in accordance with the formal requirements for dissertations intended to be a basis for awarding the degree of doktor in the area of social sciences, in the academic discipline of management and quality science.

Conclusions

The doctoral dissertation submitted to me for review, **mgr Solomon Kunle OMOGBEMI's *Organisational Image and Stakeholder Engagement: Exploring Social Responsibility as a Driver of Competitive Advantage of a University***, supervisor: **prof. Akademii WSB, dr hab. Katarzyna Szczepańska-Woszczyna**, meets the requirements specified in the Polish Law of 20 July 2018 on Higher Education, Research, and Science (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 478, as amended), i.e., constitutes an original solution to a research problem and confirms the doctoral student's general theoretical knowledge in the area of social sciences (academic discipline: management and quality science) and his ability to carry out research and academic activity on his own. Consequently, I request that the doctoral student is permitted to progress to the next stages of the doctoral procedure.

Gliwice, 18/08/2025

