

REFEREE'S REVIEW

Program:	Master in Management
Student:	Ostrovskaya Anna
Title of thesis:	Relationship between social capital of board of directors and financial results of Russian multinational companies

Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis. Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis' topic, aim and objectives.	5	4	3	2
Structure and logic of the text flow. Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.	5	4	3	2
Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives. Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.	5	4	3	2
Quality of data gathering and description. Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.	5	4	3	2
Scientific aspect of the thesis. Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives.	5	4	3	2
Practical/applied nature of research. Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results.	5	4	3	2
Quality of thesis layout. Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defense, correct layout of tables, figures, references.	5	4	3	2

Each item above is evaluated on the following scale, as applicable: 5 = the thesis meets all the requirements, 4 = the thesis meets almost all the requirements, 3 = a lot of the requirements are not met in the thesis, 2 = the thesis does not meet the requirements.

Additional comments:

There are many studies devoted to the relationship between various board of directors' characteristics and firm financial performance with practical evidence from both developed and emerging markets. Only few studies, however, focus on the social capital of board of directors due to the novelty of the concept and difficulties of obtaining the data. Mater thesis of Ostrovskaya A. is devoted to the analysis of the relationship between social capital of board of directors and financial results of Russian multinational enterprises. The topic is relevant and promising from both academic and business perspective.

The goal of the master thesis is to explore an existence of a relationship between internal and external social capital of board of directors by analysis of current theories and methods of research of social capital of board of directors and test of existing methodology based on the sample of Russian MNEs. Objectives set in the research are aligned with the research goal. The topic is actual and interesting, and the research flow is consistent.

The structure of the thesis is logical. Master thesis consists of Introduction, two chapters and Discussion of results. The theoretical chapter discusses key theoretical concept of social capital, board of directors and multinational enterprises in emerging markets, linking these concepts together and elaborating on the research of social capital of board of directors and its relationship to the firm performance. The empirical chapter is consistent with the literature review presented in the theoretical chapter. It outlines research methodology, justifies sample selection, describes data collection process and presents the results of the quantitative analysis.

The literature review on the prior research of social capital of board of directors is worth mentioning due to its thoroughness and inclusion of newest articles on this topic. Ostrovskaya A. provides both theoretical and empirical evidence of existing research on board social capital and highlights the research of its relationship to the financial results of the companies.

Hypotheses stated in the research are consistent with the research goal and objectives. The data collection process is thoroughly described and the sample selection is well argued by the author based on the existing research. The methodology of regression analysis is justified and well explained. Results of the regression analysis are discussed.

Ostrovskaya A. shows capacity of independent analytical approach to academic research.

Critical comments and questions:

1. Part 2.1.2. and part 2.2.2. both include definitions of social capital. What was the rationale of the author decided to separate those definitions in two different tables?
2. Literature analysis of social capital of board of directors is deep and thorough, however, author does not include the specifics of the research on board social capital in Russian markets based on the previous literature.
3. Author does provide background of selected variables for external and internal social capital, however, author does not describe other (if existent) possible proxies of social capital of board of directors. Are there other existing proxies and, if so, why has the author decided not to use them?
4. Terms such as “multinational company” and “multinational enterprise” are used inconsistently in the text of the work.
5. Although master thesis results and conclusions are presented in the paragraph 4.1., no separate paragraph is dedicated to the Conclusion of the research.

Master thesis of Anna Ostrovskaya meets the requirements of the MIM program, and according to the reviewer’s opinion deserves a/an “excellent (A / B) / good (B / C / D) / satisfactory (D / E) / unsatisfactory (F)” grade, thus the author can be given the desired degree.

Date 2.06.2016

Referee:

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