

Report on Doctoral Thesis

Doctoral student:	Ghulam Kalsoom
Title of the Doctoral Thesis:	Servant leadership and stakeholder pressure support corporate social responsibility implementation in the banking sector
Reviewer:	prof. Ing. Aleksandr Ključnikov, Ph.D.
Place of Doctoral Examination:	Faculty of Management and Economics, Tomas Bata University in Zlín, the Czech Republic

Evaluation of the actuality of the topic of the Doctoral Thesis

The topic of the doctoral thesis is current, timely, and academically relevant. Corporate social responsibility implementation, ethical culture, and moral forms of leadership remain important themes in management research, especially in service industries exposed to strong stakeholder expectations and reputational risks. The focus on the banking sector is justified by the sector's high public visibility, regulatory exposure, and societal importance.

The effort to examine this issue in the context of Pakistan gives the thesis additional relevance, because much of the prior literature has focused on more developed institutional environments. At the same time, the contextual justification of Pakistan, although present in the thesis, is not always sufficiently sharp and convincing. In several places, the argument remains rather general and would benefit from a more precise explanation of why Pakistan represents a particularly suitable and analytically distinctive setting for examining the proposed relationships.

Evaluation of the fulfillment of the objectives set out in the dissertation thesis.

The dissertation formulates a clear and ambitious main objective: to examine the role of servant leadership and stakeholder pressure in CSR implementation in the banking sector, while incorporating the mediating role of organizational ethical culture and the moderating role of moral meaningfulness, and complementing the quantitative findings with qualitative inquiry. The mixed-method design combines a survey of 220 banking employees and managers with interviews conducted in eight banks, which gives the work a broader empirical scope.

The main objective of the thesis can be considered fulfilled. The dissertation develops a conceptual model, formulates hypotheses, tests the relationships empirically, and provides an interpretive discussion of the results. However, the formulation of the research questions and research objectives is not fully anchored in the logic of the literature review. Although the questions correspond to the later empirical model, they appear somewhat detached from the

critical synthesis of prior studies and from the explicitly identified research gap. This weakens the internal coherence of the overall design.

Evaluation of the procedure used to achieve the research objectives, the results of the Doctoral Thesis, and the contribution of the student

The thesis is built on a broad theoretical base. The literature review covers stakeholder theory, servant leadership, stakeholder pressure, ethical culture, moral meaningfulness, and CSR implementation. The selected constructs are relevant, and the overall conceptual framework is understandable. The mixed-method approach is also one of the strengths of the thesis.

From a methodological point of view, the quantitative part is generally adequate. The use of PLS-SEM is acceptable for the proposed model. The qualitative part also adds useful contextual insight by identifying themes related to leadership traits, CSR activities, barriers, and stakeholder pressures in banks. The core empirical findings are meaningful. In particular, the positive effects of servant leadership on CSR implementation and organizational ethical culture, as well as the mediating role of organizational ethical culture, can be considered interesting and relevant. At the same time, stakeholder pressure was not supported as a direct predictor of CSR implementation, which is also an important finding rather than a weakness in itself.

Nevertheless, the thesis has several limitations that should be explicitly noted.

First, the description of the quantitative sample and data collection procedure is not sufficiently precise. Although the dissertation states that 1,000 questionnaires were distributed through LinkedIn and e-mail surveys and that 220 valid responses were obtained, the exact distribution process, respondent selection logic, and the respondents' organizational roles are not described in sufficient detail. The sample profile provides basic demographic and departmental information, but it does not clearly demonstrate that the respondents were the most relevant informants for examining CSR implementation. In particular, their actual responsibilities and involvement in CSR-related activities remain insufficiently explained, which reduces the interpretability of the results.

Second, the introductory part of the thesis is not fully coherent. In particular, the research gap is not presented sufficiently clearly in the abstract, and the research questions and objectives are not derived from the literature review in a fully convincing way.

Overall, the student demonstrates the ability to work independently on a demanding topic, build a coherent conceptual model, and apply advanced empirical methods. The student's contribution is therefore positive and clearly visible. The dissertation would, however, benefit from tighter integration of the literature review with the research questions and a more precise explanation of the respondent structure.

Evaluation of the contribution to the development of the field of study and the practice

The doctoral thesis contributes to the field by linking servant leadership, stakeholder pressure, organizational ethical culture, and CSR implementation in one integrated framework. This is a

relevant contribution, especially in the banking sector and in a non-Western context. The thesis also contributes by using a mixed-method design, which helps enrich the predominantly quantitative orientation of many prior studies in this area.

From a practical point of view, the dissertation offers useful implications for bank management, particularly by highlighting the roles of moral leadership, ethical culture, and internal organizational conditions in CSR implementation. The findings can be of interest to managers, policymakers, and other stakeholders concerned with responsible business conduct in banking. At the same time, practical implications should be interpreted with some caution because the exact organizational relevance of the surveyed respondents is not always fully clear from the methodological description.

Evaluation of the formal and language aspects of the Doctoral Thesis

The dissertation is overall readable and follows the standard structure of an empirical doctoral thesis. The sequence of chapters is logical, the literature coverage is extensive, and the work reflects evident effort and academic seriousness.

At the same time, the formal and language quality of the manuscript is not fully consistent. The formatting is uneven in several places, some figures, especially in the theoretical part, appear to be of weaker visual quality, and Table 1 has only limited analytical relevance to the core objective of the thesis. The text would also benefit from more careful stylistic and language editing, as it contains awkward formulations, grammatical imperfections, and several editorial inconsistencies in hypotheses, labels, and presentation details, including an evident inconsistency in the labeling of H10. These shortcomings do not fundamentally undermine the thesis, but they reduce its overall professional polish and indicate that a more thorough final revision would have been beneficial.

Evaluation of the publications of the doctoral candidate

The doctoral candidate presented 3 Scopus-indexed journal articles, 1 non-indexed journal article, and 7 conference outputs. A part of these publications is thematically related to the dissertation topic, although the alignment across the whole list is only partial. Overall, the publication activity can be considered sufficient for the defense, but rather at the lower boundary of the expected standard for a doctoral candidate.

Questions for the student for further discussion

1. The thesis states that questionnaires were distributed through LinkedIn and e-mail surveys. Could you explain in more detail how the respondents were specifically identified, contacted, and selected for the quantitative part of the research?
2. How do you justify the analytical relevance of the respondent group for examining CSR implementation, given that the thesis does not describe in sufficient detail their exact organizational roles and actual involvement in CSR-related activities?
3. Why do you consider Pakistan to be a particularly suitable context for this research beyond the general argument that it is a developing and non-Western country?

4. In your opinion, what is the main reason why stakeholder pressure was not confirmed as a direct predictor of CSR implementation in your quantitative model?

Final statement of the reviewer on the evaluation of the Doctoral Thesis

Based on a comprehensive assessment of the topic, the degree of achievement of the objectives, the results of the thesis, and its benefits for practice and for the development of the scientific field, I recommend the dissertation thesis for the defense. In case of a successful defense, I propose granting the doctoral candidate the academic title of "Doctor" (abbreviated as "Ph.D.").

In Ostrava, 08.06.2026

prof. Ing. Aleksandr Ključnikov, Ph.D.
European Centre for Business Research
Panevropská univerzita, a.s.