

Business Administration State Examinations Bachelor's Thesis Evaluation by Defense Opponent

January 2017

Student Name: Alexandra Bakhnova	Student Number: 510371
Opponent Name: Dan Ravick Fiala	Date: January 6, 2016
Specialization: Marketing	
Thesis Title: The Word-Of-Mouth Phenomena In the Social Networks Century. Are Social Networks Becoming More Persuasive Than Word-Of-Mouth Marketing In the Czech Republic?	

A) OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE DIPLOMA WORK:

The author attempted to research if social networks are becoming more persuasive than traditional word of mouth marketing. The author believed that the output of this work would be useful to businesses located in the Czech Republic in that it would help businesses to adapt their marketing strategies.

The author had 3 statements that she was seeking to investigate: 1. If there is a recognizable shift to from traditional WOM to internet (digital) marketing. 2 To determine if reviews that appeared in social media are more reliable than WOM in real life and 3. What influences the purchasing behavior more of people in the Czech Republic –social networks or digital WOM?

B) OVERALL EVALUATION/REVIEW OF THE DIPLOMA WORK:

Note: The evaluation (review) should consist of between 400-700 words (i.e. minimum 1 A4 page). It should cover ALL of the AREAS below:

(1) Effectiveness of approach/research methods used by student in work

The author uses secondary as well primary research, in which she created, conducted and analyzed her own survey. Using a wide range of secondary and primary research is positive; however, the most important part of doing primary research is to design the survey in such that it can be relied on to be statistically significant and representative. Here 587 responses were received but it was not clear how many were sent/given or how many impressions on social network they might have garnered. Also, in order to determine if Social Networks are becoming more persuasive than traditional WOM shouldn't we be looking at all the ways that people purchase and not limit that to people that are just coming from the web - or who received a survey in hand (here the particulars are very vague).

(2) Use and effectiveness of literature appropriate for the theme studied

The author used an acceptable quantity of literature in her research. However, more research from educational and professional organizations with expertise in this area would have been helpful.

(3) Usefulness of the work for the student and the study program

This work is beneficial to the student in that it helped them to think about issues which are important for businesses to remain competitive today. In order for this work to be beneficial for others it would have to have been written more clearly – better sentence structure, wording and grammar –the writing is a bit confusing throughout the paper.

(4) Ability of the student to use and apply theory

There is a rather large dearth of theory in this paper as really no frameworks, models, tools and techniques were used. A few new phrases were introduced like “word of mouse” but there was no explanation given as to what it means. What this paper is lacking is a systematic and organized analysis using marketing and strategy tools.

It is good that the author did primary research but the most important part of any research is to ensure that the survey is conducted and designed correctly so that readers can feel confident that its results are statistically significant and representative. Here nothing is stated as to what sampling methodology was used which is a pretty big deficit. Information should be very transparent on exactly who the surveys were given to where and a what time at least –This was also a bit of

a mystery.

(5) Strengths and weaknesses of the work as a whole

Strength – The paper made a fair attempt at answering the thesis topic question and conducting primary research.

Weaknesses – The paper could use better structure. Also, sentence structure and grammar would need to be improved drastically. Wording is not standard and this negatively affects the readability of the paper. Not enough theory, tools, techniques and models are used and the method of how the primary research was designed needed to be described more clearly and transparently.

C) SPECIFIC POINTS/QUESTIONS TO BE RESPONDED TO (DEFENSE QUESTIONS/MANDATORY):

1. In your thesis topic you are investigating if social networks are becoming more persuasive than word-of-mouth marketing in the Czech republic? What was your quantification of persuasive? What does persuasive actually mean in your study –increasing sales or brand awareness?

2. Please explain how you would design your primary research so that you can be confident that your findings are statistically significant and representative?

D) POINTS AWARDED:

Criteria	Maximum Points	Points Awarded
Effectiveness of approach/research methods	25	19
Use and effectiveness of appropriate literature	40	29
Usefulness of the work	10	7
Ability of the student to use and apply theory	25	16
Total Points		71
Grade		3

OPPONENT RECOMMENDED GRADE:

Grade	Points	Explanation
1	90-100	Excellent, demonstrates full and complete understanding of the theme or topic.
2	80-89	Very Good, demonstrates effective understanding of the theme. Average to above average level.
3	70-79	Good, demonstrates adequate understanding of the theme appropriate for a Bachelor's level student, with some shortcomings. Below average to average level.
4	0-69	Insufficient, significant shortcomings in understanding or knowledge base, below the expected competence level for a bachelor's degree.

IACBE measures (mandatory):

Additionally, please provide the below information for IACBE accreditation tracking purposes. Simply place an 'x' in the box that applies in each category.

	N/A	Inadequate	Adequate	Good	Very Good	Excellent
The student is able to demonstrate knowledge of the ethical obligations of business and apply them to business decisions.	X					
The student is able to apply appropriate management theory to intercultural business scenarios.			X			
The student is able to use		X				

appropriate decision support tools.						
The student is able to describe the global and economic environment of business.			X			
The student is able to demonstrate effective analytical and critical-thinking skills in an organizational context.		X				
Marketing Specialization Questions:						
The student uses concepts that are specific to a marketing specialization			X			
The student integrates concepts that are specific to a marketing specialization		X				
The student's conclusions are based on knowledge specific to a marketing specialization.			X			