

## HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

### Masaryk University

**Applicant**

Ing. Michal Jirásek, Ph.D.

**Habilitation thesis**

Organizational adaptation in the changing environment

**Reviewer**

prof. Ing. et Ing. Ondřej Machek, Ph.D.

**Reviewer's home unit,  
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Faculty of Business Administration  
Prague University of Economics and Business

The submitted habilitation thesis is a collection of published works provided with a unifying commentary. The unifying commentary consists of 52 pages, meeting the basic formal requirements for this type of work. As for the unifying commentary, the author has chosen the unifying theme of organizational adaptation. The correlation of the individual articles has been clearly argued, and organizational adaptation seems to be a suitable common denominator of the author's scientific research to date. The unifying commentary presents three research questions addressed by the individual studies – it is unfortunate, however, that the habilitation thesis lacks a unified and explicitly stated objective, which is rather customary for similar works.

As for the studies included in the aforementioned body of work, there are six articles in peer-reviewed journals, two of which belong to the first quartile of the field 5.2 Economics and Business, three in the second quartile, and one of the articles was published in the "mega-journal" *Plos One*, which is not discipline-specific. Most of these journals are published by renowned publishing houses. However, it is worth noting that the article in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* is only 4 pages long and is not a scientific research article (which I have deduced from its content, its placement in the "Practitioner Corner" section and the lack of a theoretical basis or research methodology). The author is the sole author of the articles in the *Journal of Strategy and Management* and the *Journal of Organization Design*. The requirements for studies that can be included in a habilitation thesis according to the applicable rules at Masaryk University have been met.

A strength of the author's long-term research is certainly the methodological basis and the connection between academic research and practice, as evidenced by the variety of methodologies applied. The very fact that the articles have successfully passed the peer-review process in the journals in question guarantees, to some extent, the quality of the scientific research of the author team. Having perused the relevant studies, I can attest to their theoretical and methodological quality and I have no reservations with respect to their content; in my opinion, the research methods correspond to current "good practice" in international journals, addressing, for example, various types of bias such as common method bias, survivor bias, non-response bias, etc.; it is unfortunate that many colleagues I am personally acquainted with tend to forget about these.

What I find missing in the author's habilitation thesis, which the author himself admits in the unifying commentary, is a dynamic view and thus the availability of multiple observations instead of cross-sectional data. This is a growing problem today, especially when discussing mediation models, such as the study *Determinants of overall franchise satisfaction: Application of the performance feedback theory*. As a matter of fact, some journals explicitly prohibit the publication of mediation studies that use only cross-sectional data. I therefore appreciate that the author intends to take this shortcoming into account in his future research.

Furthermore, I would expect a quality scientific study to assess not only the reliability of the constructs, which the authors did (i.e., Cronbach's alpha), but also their discriminant and convergent validity. Exploratory factor analysis, which the authors use, is by its very name no longer ideal for this purpose because, unlike confirmatory factor analysis, it is not a "test" and does not allow for the evaluation of validity metrics such as AVE, MSV, ASV, and the like, which I believe would be considered quite standard today.

In terms of the contribution of the habilitation thesis, I can say that the author argues the theoretical and

practical contributions convincingly and clearly on page 36. The contributions can be backed up by the existing citations to the submitted studies, which (except for paper 3) are already gaining citation acclaim. If we exclude auto-citations and retracted papers, then Paper 1: 7 citations, Paper 2: 9 citations, Paper 4: 5 citations, Paper 5: 9 citations, and Paper 6: 1 citation. Given the years of publication, these are adequate numbers.

Also based on my personal judgment, I can conclude that the author contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of organizational adaptability and represents a contribution to the scientific field of Business Economics and Management. Above all, the author contributes not to local but also to international academic literature, thus fulfilling, among other things, one of the basic conditions for obtaining the scientific and pedagogical title "docent". With his habilitation thesis, the author proves without a doubt that he is capable of conducting high-quality scientific research and publishing in high-quality foreign journals, which in my opinion qualifies him for the position of associate professor at a renowned university.

### Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence:

I have perused the attached studies with interest. However, their content prompts the need to respond to a few additional questions:

1. The article *Ownership Structure of Franchise Chains: Trade-Off Between Adaptation and Control* explores the non-linear relationship between PCO and environmental uncertainty. This is revealed by the positive regression coefficient of the quadratic term in the regression equation. Surprisingly, I was unable to find in the article the exact location of the "turning point" (the minimum of the function) and whether it is too close to the boundaries of the variation range (i.e. that the minimum is located within the realistic values of the "environmental uncertainty" variable and not e.g. somewhere within negative values), in order to be able to actually claim that it is a U-relation and not a mere monotonic relationship that is only increasing or decreasing in real values, but never "breaking" anywhere. At the same time, I could not find descriptive statistics in the paper showing the minimum and maximum values of the "environmental uncertainty" variable. From the attached studies, I infer that the author uses the Stata program, which enables performing exact tests of U-relationships. Could the author therefore present the position of the "turning point" in the debate, i.e. whether it is within the realistic values (between the minimum and maximum values) of the "environmental uncertainty" variable?
2. The article *Determinants of overall franchisee satisfaction: Application of the performance feedback theory* reports that a mediation has been found: "relationship performance may mediate the relationships between performance feedback and overall franchisee satisfaction". In my opinion, however, mediation has not been tested, because only direct effects ( $X \rightarrow Y$ ,  $X \rightarrow M$ ,  $M \rightarrow Y$ ) are examined, but not indirect effects ( $X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$ ) (which are traditionally examined by bootstrapping, for example). Since the authors state that SEM results are available upon request, would it be possible to verify that both direct and indirect effects are indeed present to constitute mediation? (I assume that the software used for SEM, be it SPSS AMOS, Stata, R, or other, can do this).

### Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled "Organizational adaptation in the changing environment" by Ing. Michal Jirásek, Ph.D. **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Business Management.

Date:  
Prague

Signature: / Ondřej Machek

6 December 2024

<sup>1</sup> UTEST: Stata module to test for a U-shaped relationship, <https://ideas.repec.org/c/boc/bocode/s456874.html>

