

Higher School for Insurance and Finance (VUZF University)

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. **Mariana Mateeva Petrova**
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of dissertation for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences professional field 3.8. Economics doctoral program Finance, Insurance and Social Security.

Author: Norbert Życzyński, PhD

Topic: Marginalization of sales chains and vulnerability to financial and image crisis in the context of the implementation of the omnichannel strategy

1. General description of the presented materials

By order № 28 of 02.03.2021 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance Assoc. Prof. Dr. Grigoriy Vazov I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury for providing a procedure for defense of a dissertation on the topic of **Marginalization of sales chains and vulnerability to financial and image crisis in the context of the implementation of the omnichannel strategy** for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.8. Economics, PhD program "Finance, Insurance and Social Security". The author of the dissertation is **Dr. Norbert Życzyński**.

The materials submitted by **Dr. Norbert Życzyński** include documents according to the presented inventory: reference for the scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the dissertation; reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for acquisition of degree "Doctor of Sciences" in professional field 3.8. Economics; dissertation work; autoreferate. The doctoral student has attached a list of 18 publications on the topic of the dissertation, and the autoreferate contains 25, including 2 monographs.

2. Relevance of the topic and expediency of the set goals and objectives

The formulated topic is dedicated to a relevant and significant for modern conditions economic problem: theoretical and practical aspects of the functioning of distributed trade networks in the context of their marginalization.

With the interbranch marginalization of trade networks, their particular susceptibility to the emergence and spread of crisis situations is in dire need of proper and reasonable organizational and technical preparation for sudden and unexpected events and taking active action.

The presented proposal for implementation of the integrated omnichannel strategy, based on implemented IT support, which results from the analysis of the possibilities for transparent integration of sales, performed through different channels in the surveyed enterprises, may be an appropriate way for functioning distributed business networks in a developing information society.

The research thesis is correctly formulated and models the logic of the dissertation research and the applied analytical tools.

The dissertation is structured in accordance with the goal, hypotheses and the subject of the research and reflects the author's approach to the research topic.

3. Knowledge of the problem

Dr. Norbert Życzyński shows a thorough and objective formulation and evaluation of the problems explored in the dissertation. 165 literary and internet sources of specialized scientific literature in different languages, normative documents were used and analyzed.

4. Research methodology

Theoretical and empirical research methods, including observation and scientific method CATI, have been used for the realization of the set goal and for the solution of the research tasks.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of an introduction, an exposition in three chapters, conclusions, literature, a list of included figures and tables, there is no official conclusion. The development is in a total volume of 214 pages, 56 tables and 77 figures are presented, 165 are the used literary and internet sources.

The object and the subject of the research are not defined clearly enough:

The subject of the dissertation covers the theoretical and practical aspects of the functioning of the distributed trade networks in the context of their marginalization and ways of implementing the omnichannel strategy.

In the survey, the subjects were selected on the basis of the list of the 500 largest Polish companies published by "Rzeczpospolitą". The survey sample includes representatives of all voivodeships with a predominance of Masovian Voivodeship, as about 40% of the enterprises on the list are based in this voivodeship.

The goal of the dissertation is to analyze and evaluate the problems with the marginalization of distributed trade chains as a special type of enterprises, characterized by interbranch marginalization, which makes them particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation.

To achieve this goal, the following scientific hypotheses have been tested and confirmed:

Hypothesis 1. Scattered trade networks as a special type of enterprises, characterized by interbranch dependence, are particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation.

Hypothesis 2. Implementing the omnichannel strategy can be seen as a proactive and preventive action that allows to obtain and maintain a competitive position.

The dissertation tries to analyze and evaluate the problem of the dependence of scattered trade chains as a special type of enterprises, characterized by interbranch dependence, and analyzes the possibility of such organizations to implement the omnichannel strategy. The restrictive frameworks in the study, as well as the specific periods of its implementation, are not clear enough.

Those who have a sales network and those who sell through an online store were interviewed, after which a comparative analysis was made in the context of factors influencing marginalization. In the process of analyzing the implementation of an integrated multi-channel strategy, a study was conducted using the method of scientific monitoring on a group of Polish companies using distributed multi-channel retail networks, after which the way of implementing this strategy was identified and presented in regards to the good practices leading to a synergistic effect.

The set goal is important for the economic system, and the solution of the tasks ensures its achievement.

The first section presents the development of trade throughout history, with particular emphasis on innovative technological solutions in the field of supporting complex multi-channel sales. **The second section** describes the characteristics of marginal industries, with a focus on studies that show the interbranch marginalization of the trade network, as well as the resulting special susceptibility to crisis situations. **The third section** is a detailed presentation of the results of the study on the necessary scope of implementation of an integrated IT system in a distributed sales network to support the strategy of all channels in distributed sales networks.

The analysis of the way of implementing the integrated omnichannel strategy was performed using the method of scientific observation, a study of a group of Polish companies using distributed retail networks and at the same time serving sales from an Internet channel. On this basis, a proposal for the implementation of the multi-channel integration method was identified and presented, taking into account the best practices encountered during the study.

The distinction in the conceptual apparatus is not sufficiently clear, for example in item 1.4. the distinction between omnichannel and multichannel as well as the definition of Omnichannel's strategy (p. 59) are not sufficiently clarified.

The preparation and provision of an appropriate interface in the form of a web service makes the central ERP IT system independent of the customer's choice in the context of online stores and mobile applications, providing relatively easy and fast integration. The implementation of the structure of such an interface, which allows to integrate any online store or mobile application and, therefore, the support of additional sales channels in an integrated multi-level IT system can be implemented in the REST architecture using queries and responses in JSON format. This solution assumes best practices in the process of building distributed applications and does not depend on basic protocols. The advantage is the ability to use open standards, which facilitates the separation of the client's implementation from the implementation of the service. The API implemented in this way operates in a client-server model and has a resource-based structure that can be accessed in JSON format.

6. Contributions and significance of development for science and practice

The acquaintance with the dissertation allows to assess that the goal of the research has been achieved, and the tasks arising from it have received adequate solutions. As a consequence, I am getting the belief that there is enough evidence in the dissertation for scientific and applied contributions.

According to the author, the conducted researches of the problem allow to deepen the knowledge about the conditions influencing the special vulnerability of crises of trade networks, which in turn allows to make a new classification of this type of organizations as interbranch marginal enterprises. The implementation of an integrated, transparent omnichannel strategy removes the barrier between the individual channels and the creation of a new multi-channel commercial service and the use of the synergy effect.

The analysis shows that a potentially higher percentage of network trading companies have appropriate anti-crisis structures, with a relatively large percentage of companies with anti-crisis structures appearing in the auction via the Internet channel.

The presented research results and identified problems clearly show that in order for a distributed sales company to operate without serious problems and concerns and not lose customers, it must integrate sales channels as part of the implementation of the omnichannel strategy supported by properly implemented IT system.

In this case, it can be concluded that the main goal of the work has been achieved, which is to analyze and evaluate the problem of marginalization of distributed retail networks as a special type of enterprises characterized by interbranch marginalization, at the same time highly susceptible to crisis situation.

Results with practical and applied functions

1. Identify the components of the multi-channel strategy and their impact on business in the face of the rapidly changing technological environment that shapes consumer behavior and expectations, and present cases of use in the context of trade marginalization networks and their use of modern IT solutions.

2. Emphasizing the various theoretical foundations of the operation of commercial enterprises, in particular scattered trade networks. Identify a certain degree of vulnerability of trade chains, where the risk of crisis is so high that it should be included in standard management activities.

7. Evaluation of dissertation publications

The results of the research on the topic of the dissertation are correctly presented to the scientific community with 18 scientific publications, independently and co-authored, of which I can conditionally accept 16. They are an indicator of the deep scientific interests of the doctoral student and that the scientific contributions in the dissertation are personally of the doctoral student.

The publications are characterized by purposefulness and analyticalness, well-argued author's position, reflect the achievements of the dissertation obtained in the course of research. The reference shows the following reflected citations:

In Scopus - 4 publications, 6 citations (4 without self-citations), H=1; in Publons - 15 publications (7 in WoS), 3 citations, H=1; in Google Scholar - 17 citations, H=2. There are 2 monographs with a total volume of 322 pages.

8. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements

Attached is a Reference for fulfillment by the doctoral student of the minimum national requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the professional field 3.8. Economics. The total number of points multiply exceeds the required number, such as indicators from group D are 320 points instead of 100, and indicators from group E - 120.

9. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution

The presented dissertation on the topic „**Marginalization of sales chains and vulnerability to financial and image crisis in the context of the implementation of the omnichannel strategy**“ is a conscientious scientific and applied research.

I have no doubt about the personal contribution of the doctoral student, expressed in in-depth research, creative thinking and further development of the theory and the problem solved in the work, namely studying and developing the scientific bases of the functioning of the distributed trade networks in the context of their marginalization.

10. Autoreferate

The autoreferate consisting of 36 pages has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of LDAS and RILDAS. It is structurally correct and properly reflects the logic and consistency and contributions of the dissertation. It demonstrates the skills of **Dr. Norbert Życzyński** to synthesize and summarize in order to present her most important ideas and conclusions.

11. Critical comments and recommendations

The presented list of publications is not prepared according to the standards, it is not clear what is the participation of the author in the particular publication and which author in the publication is he. The list presents in general the publications that are not classified according to specific criteria (eg in journals, conferences, peer-reviewed publications, with IF / IR), although in the compliance report they are grouped according to the respective indicators. Publications should be of fuller and more comprehensive informative value, especially those with IF / IR. There is also diversity in the presented list of citations, as well as in the bibliography to the dissertation itself. Not all publications submitted to the list are on the topic of the dissertation, for example: *Military economic branches in the logistic military system - historical approach*, 2016.(co-authors A. Gazda, T. Olejarz), *Monitoring the process of anodising of VW70U pistons using the control chart*, *Metalurgija*,57 No.4, 2018, s. 349-352. Co-author A. Gazda, A. Pacana. It is not clear when exactly the publication was published: *Kryzys w relacjach z kooperantami zagranicznymi – metody zapobiegania*, referat został opublikowany w materiałach pokongresowych, wydawnictwo z VI Kongresu Public Relations, Rzeszów 2007.

The information is not up-to-date everywhere, for example on pages 39, 41, where forecast values for 2020 and 2021 are indicated, as well as on pages 55-57. Most of the sources used are quite outdated, from the last century, and there are almost no sources (excluding regulations) after 2016.

Wrong numbering in the contents is noticed.

As a recommendation, and also due to the transparency of the presented study, it is desirable the analysis, which concerns enterprises operating in Poland, to be expanded and confirmed in an international context.

Of interest is the answer to the following questions:

What changes are found in crisis management during the Covid effect? How did the situation with the Corona crisis affect this type of trade?

Have relevant surveys been conducted after 2017, are comparative analysis envisaged?

12. Personal impressions

I do not know the doctoral student personally. We do not have joint publications and developments.

My impressions come from the dissertation, author's autoreferate and dissertation publications. They show a serious and erudite researcher, a bona fide scientist with an extensive theoretical background and proven ability for independent research.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements (s) of LDASRB and RILDASRB. The presented materials and dissertation results correspond to the specific requirements of the Regulations for admission and training of doctoral students at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

The dissertation shows that **Dr. Norbert Życzyński** has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in Professional field 3. 8. Economics, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research.

Due to the above, I give my **positive** assessment of the research presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, autoreferate, results and contributions, and I invite the scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Science" to **Dr. Norbert Życzyński** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional field 3. 8. Economics; PhD program "Finance, Insurance and Social Security".

08.04.2021 г.

REVIEWER: 