

OPINION STATEMENT

by Prof. Dr. Katia Ivanova Vladimirova, member of the Scientific Jury for awarding an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 3.7. "Administration and Management" scientific subject „ Social Management“ of the doctoral student Martin Atanasov Zafirov on the presented dissertation titled: "Cultural Differences and Development of Human Capital in Transnational Companies"

The dissertation of Martin Zafirov is dedicated to a present-day and important topic of management of employees in large multinational companies. The topic is also relevant for Bulgaria as, on the one hand, more and more such companies are established in this country and on the other hand – many Bulgarians find jobs abroad.

The dissertation presented for defense has the classic structure for this type of development, i.e. an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendices in a total volume of 325 pages, including 273 pages main text and a rich bibliographic reference /164 sources / in Bulgarian and almost twice as much in a foreign language, mainly in English, as well as seven internet sources. This is largely explained by the fact that the object of the study is the management of employees in transnational companies in the Gulf countries. It can be assumed that the choice of the object of the research was made by the expectation that more and more similar companies or their branch offices /mainly from EU countries, but also from other continents/ could be established and developed in Bulgaria. On the other hand, there are more and more workers in Bulgaria from the so-called "third countries", from countries outside the EU, including from the Middle and Far East of Asia, North Africa and others. Within the context, the presented dissertation can be useful and of significant interest to jobseekers and labour-seeking companies in Bulgaria, as well as to Bulgarian employers using foreign labour, particularly from states outside Europe, i.e. from Asia and Africa.

An object of the research is the place and the role of the employees from different countries in the transnational corporations in the Gulf countries and their management.

A central point in the research is the evolution in the perception and management of people in corporations as human capital, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the impact that cultural differences in a given geographical region have on the perception and management of people in transnational corporations.

The focus of the research presented for defense as a doctorate is the evolution in the management of workers, connected with their perception as human capital, and not as it was before or even now in a number of organizations as human resources, work force, etc. The change is in the transition from the perception of the working people as a factor of production to the most important capital for the functioning of a modern organization.

According to the doctoral student, this conceptual change is becoming more and more relevant in organizations that have a transnational character, and their employees have clear multicultural differences, being from different continents of the world, with different racial and religious affiliation that make the management of the employees more difficult and more complex.

Still in the Introduction the doctoral student has clearly formulated the relevance of the researched problem and the specific goals and main tasks of his research, as well as its object and the used research approach.

The main goal of the doctoral student is to prove the existence and the need of taking into account in the employees' management the cultural differences in the human capital of the transnational companies and to find and apply an adequate model for its management.

In order to achieve this goal, the doctoral student has formulated his research tasks, namely: to study the essence of the "phenomenon" as he calls the human capital by conducting a critical analysis of theoretical developments on this topic and its application; to formulate a working definition of the term "human capital" and to use it as a basis for the implementation of the practical part of the research.

On this basis, he sets himself the task to analyze and find new horizons for scientific and applied transfer with multicultural dimensions.

The other important task is to conduct a research on the role of the human capital for management under the conditions of the existing cultural differences in the studied companies, using for this purpose his personal experience, as well as to assess the differences in the human capital management in Bulgaria and on this basis to formulate his main conclusions from the study in terms of the existing differences in the two regions - the Persian Gulf and the Balkan Peninsula (Bulgaria in particular).

The doctoral student is well acquainted with the scientific literature and researches made on the subject, as well as with the practice in some large transnational organizations working with employees of different nationalities, races and religions.

We could summarize that his scientific and problematic awareness is at a high level, which is a good basis to conclude that the conclusions of his research are reasonable and deserve attention and appreciation, not only as a subject of the dissertation research, but also as accumulated knowledge and generalizations, which can be very useful for a successful professional career, as well as for the management of the researched organizations, and to a large extent, for the development of similar economic structures and processes in our country.

The completed research is presented in three chapters with an expanded internal structure.

The dissertation paper contains a number of scientific and applied scientific results, which are well formulated and presented in his well-grounded Thesis Summary.

The summaries and conclusions made prove the possibilities of the doctoral student to discover the existing and unsolved or partially solved problems in the researched field, as well as to take well-founded positions.

The research and the summaries, conclusions and recommendations formulated on its basis prove the ability of the doctoral student to conduct successful independent research and that he is able to correctly interpret the results and present them understandably, logically and accurately.

As with any study of this kind, *critical remarks or disagreements* in principle can be formulated with regard to some of the theses in the exposition, as well as others of a formal and less formal nature.

For example, there shouldn't be editorial and grammatical omissions, repetitions, inaccuracies and others in a research paper claiming for a scientific degree.

We can add the imprecise handling of terms that are within the scope of the research work, e.g. employees is not equivalent to associates or to human capital, i.e. they are only a part of them, a small part of the huge number of employees or associates working in these companies, etc.

I find the conclusions made in the first chapter not very precise.

The narration prevails throughout the text, not the presentation of theses and decisions. There are many loan-words, many grammatical errors that make it a little difficult to perceive the text and to find logical connections in it.

The dissertation would gain more with the inclusion of analytical conclusions, with the presentation of transnational companies, their characteristics, in terms of staff, their management and the techniques used for this purpose.

The summaries and conclusions made prove the possibilities of the doctoral student to discover the existing unsolved or partially solved problems in the researched field, as well as to take well-grounded positions. The presented dissertation and the summaries, conclusions and recommendations formulated on its basis prove the possibilities of the doctoral student to conduct independent research and that he is able to correctly interpret the results, as well as to present them logically and precisely.

The dissertation contains a number of scientific and applied scientific results, which are well formulated and presented in his Thesis Summary.

I recommend to the members of the Scientific Jury for the defense of the dissertation to vote for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor" to Martin Atanasov Zafirov in professional field 3.7. "Administration and Management", scientific subject 'Social Management'.

Member of the Scientific Jury (signature)
(Prof. Dr. Katia Vladimirova)