

# Review

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**By Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, PhD**, Burgas Free University, Field of education "Social, economic and legal sciences", Professional field 3.7. Administration and management, Scientific specialty: Social Management

**Subject:** Doctorate dissertation presented for the acquisition of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in scientific specialty "Social Management", professional field 3.7 Administration and management

**Candidate:** Martin Atanasov Zafirov - doctorate student of self-study in "Business Administration" doctoral program – New Bulgarian University (NBU)

**Dissertation topic:** Cultural differences in the development of the human capital in transnational companies

**Scientific supervisor:** Assoc. Prof. Dimitar Panayotov, PhD

**Reason for submission of the review:** member of the Scientific Jury, according to Order № 3-PK-128/24.03.2021 of the Rector of the New Bulgarian University - Prof. D. Sc. Plamen Doynov.

## EVALUATION OF THE DOCTORATE DISSERTATION

### 1. Importance of the researched problem in scientific and scientific-applied relation

The issues researched in the dissertation related to human resource management are always relevant, studied and discussed in various aspects by many authors for many years and to this day and in this aspect the topic is a good candidate for a dissertation. The specifics of the thesis presented is in the subject of the research, namely human capital in transnational companies in the Persian Gulf. The focus of the research is the impact of cultural differences in a given geographical region on the perception and management of people in transnational corporations. The author arguments the actuality of the research with the enhanced processes of globalization and international cooperation. Taking into account the evolutionary transition in the perception of human resources as a human factor and human capital, as well as the impact of cultural differences among people working in an organization and in particular in transnational corporations, reinforces the importance of the issue examined by the doctorate student. The achieved results of the research and the conclusions and summaries drawn are useful in defining the guidelines for improvement of activities in transnational Gulf corporations, which conveys an essential practical-applied focus of the dissertation work.

### 2. Subject, objectives and tasks of the dissertation

**The main thesis** of the doctorate student is that *the human factor is fundamental for the development of transnational companies, therefore it is necessary to study the existing cultural differences and align the process of human resource management with these objectively existing differences.* Martin Zafirov defends his thesis, **aiming** to prove the existence and need of taking into account the cultural differences in the human capital of transnational companies and the implementation of adequate models for its management. In relation to the objective, he had set the

following **research tasks**: to examine the essence of the phenomenon of human capital; define the concept of human capital; to analyze the cultural aspects through the concept of cross-cultural management and the models opening up new horizons for scientific and applied transfer with multicultural dimensions; to explore the role of human capital and its governance in the face of cultural differences in transnational companies; to make comparative analysis, based on the personal experience and observations of the author, between the cultural differences in human capital in the Persian Gulf and Bulgaria; specific approaches to human resources management in transnational companies, taking into account the cultural differences of personnel. According to the formulated tasks, the **subject** of the dissertation work is the *management of human capital in transnational companies, the change in approaches, management strategies and policies, taking into account the specifics of existing cultural differences and their impact on the development of human capital, skills, competences and leadership* and the **object** being human capital in transnational companies in the Persian Gulf. The research is **limited** in its *territorial scope* (it covers transnational corporations operating in the Persian Gulf), *theoretically* (the management of human capital in transnational corporations in the Gulf States, and when building the methodology of the research, Hofstede's model is present through its five main dimensions) and in *practical terms* (the research is based on specific parameter coordinates and assumptions).

In conclusion, it can be noted that the dissertation work has a clearly delineated purpose, the subject and object of the research are correctly defined, the main thesis is precise, and the restrictive conditions for proving it, are correctly defined. The correctly defined purpose and research tasks predetermine the content and structure of the dissertation work. The total volume of the dissertation work is 330 pages and includes three chapters, introduction, conclusion, scientific and the practical-applied contributions and bibliographical reference. The main text is 271 pages. It is supported by 63 charts, 19 tables and 6 figures. There are 36 pages of appendices, related to the research in the dissertation work. The volume of dissertation is more than satisfactory.

### **3. Degree of knowledge of the problem and conformity of the literature used**

The dissertation work is based on the research, analysis and systematization of numerous scientific publications in the thematic field studied. The presented list of the literature used and quoted contains a total of 164 sources, including 157 literary sources (59 in Bulgarian and 98 in a foreign language) and 7 internet sources. The literary review is exhaustive and the author successfully conducts a scientific selection of foreign opinion in accordance with the specifics of the subject of research. Excellent literary awareness of the author helps him to thoroughly explore the problem and justify the main thesis of his dissertation work. A contributing fact is also the author's personal experience as a result of his long job at a transnational corporation in the Persian Gulf. The accumulated practical knowledge has been reflected both in the construction of the research model as well as the entire content of the dissertation work.

### **4. Correctness in quoting a representative number of authors**

The literary sources are correctly used, according to the accepted citation requirements in scientific publications.

### **5. Existence of a justified and developed theoretical model of the research**

The author has presented a theoretical model of the research that allows to take into account the specifics of existing cultural differences and their influence on the development of human capital, skills, competences and leadership. In the construction of the research model for the analysis of cultural differences, the author pivots around certain approaches related to the classification and typology of values; the identification of different value orientations; factor analysis and different

models for continuum dimensions of national cultures. The proposed model for research and management of cultural differences and the development of human capital is affected by the dynamics of cross-cultural activity in transnational companies: the conversion of knowledge, interactive translation, procedural competence, cross-cultural skills, bi-cultural identity, the application of diverse cross-cultural technologies and their impact on the effectiveness of multi-cultural teams.

## **6. Accordance of the chosen methodology and research methods with the intended objective and tasks of the doctorate dissertation**

To achieve the objective of the doctorate thesis, the author applies an interdisciplinary and systematic approach. The interdisciplinary approach is used because of the close relation between the social, cultural and economic aspects of the issue under study. Issues related to governance and strategic achievements planning are also covered. The system approach appears as a triad of systematic thinking, a view of the object from different perspectives and a correctly resolved relation between "dependent  $\leftrightarrow$  independent variable". The research is also subject to the historical retrospective of the analysis. The methodology of the research, including the application of a variety of research approaches and methods (dialectical, analytical, systematic and abstract-logical approach, comparative analysis, constructive method, statistical methods and surveys), reveals the doctorate student's ability to synthesize, systematize, verify and on the basis of this, to justify his thesis.

## **7. Existence personal contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data**

The actual survey is based on the primary information provided by the respondents surveyed and the experts interviewed in transnational companies. The author develops and offers specialized questionnaires which collect information to explore the impact of cultural differences on human capital management in transnational organizations. Content analysis is used to analyze the completed questionnaires. In order to facilitate the businesses in conducting the surveys and to achieve a wider scope, the author created a website with clearly defined parameters for survey duration, research progress and feedback. The processing and analysis of the information, provided by the respondents is carried out using the statistical software SPSS, which allows to prove the established research hypotheses; to check the reliability of the scales used and to evaluate the strength of relationship between the researched phenomena.

Praise should be given to the author's developed methodology and applications in the verification research toolkit, combining the quantitative and qualitative methods of the principle of triangulation - a combination of different methods (questionnaires 1 and 2, expert interview – a mix of structured, unstructured or open questions, allowing the phenomena to be studied in-depth), but also offering materials, criteria or parameters for evaluating the activities (i.e. the "Cultural Intelligence Map") - directly discovering attitudes, available skills or qualities in circumstances close to the real conditions of the researched Gulf transnational companies.

The completed processing of information shows unequivocally the existence of author's own contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data.

## **8. Description of Contributions**

The dissertation work contains a number of settings, ideas and suggestions that can be credited as contributions of a scientific and practical-applied nature. I fully accept the doctorate student's claims about the contributions in his dissertation work. The list of contributions is drawn up correctly and reflects objectively the scientific results achieved by the doctorate student. The contribution points in the dissertation show that the doctorate student has in-depth knowledge in the

researched scientific field. The developed author's methodology and the research toolkit used are proof that the doctorate student is able to conduct an independent scientific research and logically interpret its results.

The submitted dissertation abstract has a volume of 53 pages. It is well formed and its content corresponds correctly with the main thesis. The abstract is composed according to the requirements, reflecting the three chapters content of the dissertation work in synthesized manner, the thesis, the object and methodology of the scientific research, as well as the theoretic methodological and empirical results achieved.

## **9. Effects of the Dissertation Work on the External Environment**

Martin Zafirov has adequately informed the scientific community about the ideas he has developed on the issues he has researched. He has 7 independent publications (2 reports, 2 studies and 4 articles) thus promoting his fundamental thesis and contributing points from his dissertation work. The reports are presented to international scientific and practical forums. The studies and articles are in reputable specialized scientific publications.

The author did not submit evidence about his publications being quoted, neither there is evidence of reviews of his publications in the scientific publications.

## **10. Opinions, Recommendations and Notes**

The achieved results, the justified conclusions and suggestions of the dissertation research could be used as a guide in the development of management strategies and policies in the human resources management process, not only in transnational organizations in the Gulf region. From an academic and academic-research point of view, this dissertation can be used by researchers in the field of human capital management in the presence of cross-cultural differences.

I don't have any critical notes on the display of ideas and settings in the dissertation.

It would be interesting to see the doctorate student's opinion on the following issue: The cultural differences of people in transnational companies require an adequate leadership style to be applied to their management. Can it be claimed that leaders in transnational companies must have specific qualities, skills, attitudes and competences? What are these specifics?

## **CONCLUSION**

The doctorate dissertation, presented by Martin Zafirov on "Cultural differences in the development of the human capital in transnational companies" is a thorough, significant and up-to-date research. It has the qualities of dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", as it presents the abilities and skills of the doctorate student to think and correctly identify an up-to-date scientific and practical problem; summarize opinions; to interpret and approve scientific advances in real practice and to make convincing conclusions and recommendations. All the above gives me the reasons to categorically place a **positive assessment** of the dissertation and to recommend to the members of the Scientific Jury **to award** MARTIN ATANASOV ZAFIROV the scientific and educational degree "DOCTOR" in the scientific specialty "Social Management" in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management".

**Date:**  
**April, 2021**

**Compiled the review:**  
**/ Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, PhD /**