

Standpoint

by Assoc. Prof. Kristian Stoyanov Hadjiev, PhD, New Bulgarian University (NBU),
Department of Administration and management, Professional field 3.7 "Administration and
management", Scientific specialty 05.02.20 "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

Author of the dissertation: Martin Atanasov Zafirov - doctorate student of self-study in doctoral program "Business Administration" – New Bulgarian University

Theme of the dissertation: Cultural differences in the development of the human capital in transnational companies

Scientific Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dimitar Panayotov, PhD

Grounds for submitting the standpoint: 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.

The standpoint was prepared in accordance with the Law for the development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations for the implementation of this Law and the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff of the New Bulgarian University.

1. General characteristics of the provided dissertation

The peer-reviewed dissertation consists of 330 pages and includes three chapters, introduction, conclusion, scientific and practical-applied contributions, bibliographical reference and 5 annexes. The main text is 271 pages and contains 63 diagrams, 19 tables and 6 figures. 164 sources are included in support of the thesis, of which - 157 literary sources (59 in Bulgarian and 98 in foreign languages) as well as 7 internet sources.

The dissertation presented is dedicated to a very **current** topic related to the management of human capital in the context of globalization and dynamic of international economic relations. The focus of the research is the impact of cultural differences in a given geographic region (Persian Gulf) on the perception and management of people in transnational corporations. The detailed evolutionary analysis in the perception of human resources as a factor and as capital, as well as the impact of cultural differences in human resource management (HRM) in transnational corporations reinforces the importance of the researched problem by the doctoral student. In this context, the ideas and proposals for enhancement of the activities of transnational Gulf corporations in the dissertation work are also of a practical nature.

The dissertation work **is balanced**, the questions under consideration are set out in their logical consistency and commitment, the style of the exhibition is scientific, the technical layout is excellent.

The objective and the tasks are certain and meaningful and fully consistent with the theme of the dissertation thesis. The main scientific problem is correctly formulated by clearly specifying its limits. The research tasks, the object, the subject and the main thesis of the research have been clearly and precisely developed. A methodology has been developed that is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the research. The concepts and terms used in the dissertation work are also specified.

The literature used, is as close as possible to the theme of the dissertation work and gives a sufficiently complete picture of the state of the researched problem. Literary sources are arranged and numbered according to the requirements of the accepted standards.

The doctoral student analyzes and systematizes a significant volume of literature sources on the subject, which are correctly quoted in the text. An own critical interpretation of the presented sources has been made.

The text is well illustrated with many tables, figures and diagrams which significantly contribute to the understanding of the thesis. The results of the scientific research are laid out clearly, logically and in an understandable manner.

Based on the above, I conclude that the utmost clarity of the doctoral student on the mentioned issues is one of the prerequisites for the high quality of the entire doctorate thesis.

2. Evaluation of the scientific and the practical-applied contributions

The structure of the dissertation work is constructed in accordance with the formulated objective and the detailed tasks.

The introduction of the dissertation contains all the necessary "props": a convincing justification of the problem and its significance; clear and precise formulations of the objective and research tasks; of the object and subject of the research. The choice for the research approaches and methods has been argumentized.

In chapter one, the doctoral student clarifies the scientific apparatus, the fundamental concepts and relationships related to the human capital in transnational companies, based on research in the scientific literature on the issues. The essential characteristics, dimensions, parameters or components of human capital are analyzed, following the evolution of thinking in relation to the relation: human resources - human capital and the different concepts for their development and management. The focus is on the interaction between the cultural differences of human capital and the management activities in transnational companies. The new requirements for moral leadership through *the prism of cross-cultural business ethics have been brought out*. The specific characteristics, typology and roles in the conditions of targeted processes for the construction and formation of cultural competence have been identified. Through the parameters of moral/ethical leadership, not only an alternative to the so-called *"leadership crisis"* is sought, but also present new approaches for analysis and interdisciplinary projections on the boundary of applied ethics and cross-cultural research in management and organizational behavior. The use of the cross-cultural business ethics toolkit allows the doctoral student to discuss: macro-cultural context, pluralism or dichotomy Western -Eastern culture and related stereotypes; ethical standards, norms and moral grounds for decision-making in a particular company; comparative moral leadership for impacts on employee creativity, organizational engagement, loyalty and functioning moral projects; the level and measures of cross-cultural competence and intelligence. From *chapter one*, the degree of development of the research problem is clear and the theoretical basis is formed, on the basis of which the doctoral student brings out the main research thesis. The conclusions reached by the doctoral student are reasonable and supported by solid argumentation. The research in chapter one is very thorough and constitutes the necessary basis for developing the methodology of empirical research.

In **chapter two**, the doctoral student develops an author's theoretical model to explore the impact of cultural differences of human capital on governance policies and approaches in transnational corporations from the Gulf states. In designing the model, the doctoral student is based on certain approaches related to the classification and typology of values; the identification of different value orientations; factor analysis and different patterns of continuum dementia of national cultures. For the purposes of the research, *a questionnaire toolkit* was developed that included specialized questionnaires to managers (**63 questions grouped into six sections**, each of which should provide different types of information) and employees in transnational corporations (22 questions grouped into three sections). The reliability of the methodology used to analyze and assess the impact of cultural differences on management approaches has been demonstrated and proven statistically. At the end of chapter two, as well as chapter one, the relevant specific conclusions were drawn.

In **chapter three**, the developed methodology (the research model) is verified in organizational practice. The actual survey is based on the primary information provided by the surveyed respondents and the experts interviewed by transnational companies. Content analysis is applied to analyze the completed questionnaires. In order to facilitate business in conducting the surveys and to achieve a wider scope, a website with clearly defined parameters for survey duration, survey progress and feedback is established. The processing and analysis of the information provided by the respondents is carried out using the statistical software SPSS, which makes it possible to prove the research hypotheses at stake; to verify the reliability of the scales used; statistical method is used to evaluate the strength of relationship between the researched phenomena.

The processed information unequivocally shows the existence of own contribution to the collection and analysis of empirical data.

The conclusion that is needed is that in all three meaningful chapters, the doctoral student shows skills for clear prominence and scientific reasoning of his views on human capital management in transnational companies. The existence of a multi-cultural environment in an organization also creates the need for new, adapted and flexible approaches and methods for human capital management.

In **the conclusion** of the doctorate dissertation, the doctoral student systematized the immediate results of the research by formulating specific **conclusions and guidelines for improving the activities of transnational Gulf corporations.**

Result of the dissertation research: confirmation of the formulated main **research thesis.**

3. Description of the scientific and the practical-applied contributions

The thesis is a *serious scientific research* of a current and significant problem. The main contributions can be considered and evaluated in two groups – scientific contributions and practical-applied contributions.

➤ *Scientific contributions:*

1) An in-depth research of the specialized scientific literature has been carried out, assessing and summarizing the theoretical statements related to the specifics of transnational corporations, the evolution of thinking in relation to the relationship: „human resources - human capital“ and various concepts for their development and management; The theoretical foundations of cross-cultural differences are also studied, which, with proper reflection and management, become a significant competitive advantage in the functioning of these corporations.

2) Interdisciplinary approaches for analysis, research and definition of the studied phenomena are applied, as the broadest methodology for deriving indicators, components and

characteristics of human capital and cultural differences, as well as a substantiated, adequate model for their management and application, included in the theoretical framework of the research.

3) Through an independent evaluation of various methodological and methodological research tools, an adequate information and methodological basis of the research has been selected, as well as its corresponding adapted methodology. An author's methodology and research tools have been developed, combining the quantitative and qualitative methods of the triangulation principle - a combination of different methods (questionnaires 1 and 2, expert interview), but also offering materials, criteria or parameters for evaluation of activities („Cultural Intelligence Map“) - directly ascertaining attitudes, skills available or qualities displayed in circumstances close to the real conditions of the Gulf transnational companies surveyed.

➤ ***Practical – applied contributions***

1) A toolkit has been selected and applied, which can play the role of a matrix for cognitive management, in which a process of joint perception and compromise between the three forms of cultural knowledge is carried out: general-specific-cross-cultural technology, giving guidelines for constantly evolving HR function, the „architecture“ of learning, the integrated knowledge and specific skills needed to manage human capital and cultural differences in multinational companies.

2) Recommendations have been developed and proposed for possible management strategies and policies to be used in Gulf multinational corporations in order to overcome some of the proven problems.

3) In addition, comparative cross-cultural analyzes have been carried out, which indicate similarities and differences (based on the research, the author's observation and the findings), and which have not been studied so far, assessing their impact on human capital behavior and development based on current practices used in the surveyed corporations.

4) Specific guidelines for improving human capital management are provided, taking into account the specifics of cultural differences in transnational companies in the studied region. These recommendations are aimed at changing the attitude of companies towards short-term results; strengthening communication in companies; adequate perception of the role of the „manager“; the perception and observance of the unwritten rules.

4. Impact of the dissertation work on the external environment

On the subject of the dissertation, 7 independent publications (2 reports, 2 studies, 3 articles) have been made, two of which are in English language in reputable specialized national and international publications. All the publications demonstrate that a number of the ideas and conclusions formulated in the research are accessible to the professional audience.

5. Assessment of the dissertation abstract

The presented author's abstract correctly reflects the content of the dissertation work. In it, in synthesized form, the main points of the dissertation are laid out: a common characteristic; content and structure of the dissertation; scientific contributions; publications related to the dissertation work.

6. Critical notes, recommendations and questions

I have no critical notes, recommendations or questions on the presentation of the ideas and settings in the dissertation work.

7. Conclusion

The presented dissertation demonstrates that the author has in-depth knowledge in the problem he has researched. The theme of the dissertation work is up-to-date and significant in scientific and practical applications. The dissertation is a completed scientific and practical-applied research that meets the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations for the implementation of this Law and the internal legal framework of New Bulgarian University for the award of an educational and scientific degree "Doctor". In his research, the doctoral student shows that he has the ability to conduct independent research and obtain specific scientific and practical-applied results and contributions.

All this gives me all the reasons to provide a **positive assessment of the dissertation** work and to propose to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to decide on **the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Martin Zafirov in scientific specialty "Social Management" in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management"**.

Sofia,
15 April 2021

Signature:

/ Assoc. Prof. Kristian Hadjiev, PhD