

STATEMENT OF OPINION

From associate profesor Dr. Alexander Ivanov Valkov, University of National and World Economy – Sofia, “Administration and Management”, professional strand 3.7 “Administration and Management”, scientific field of study 05.02.20 “Social Management”

Regarding: Submitted dissertation work for acquiring an academic title of “doctor” in the scientific field of “Social Management”, professional strand 3.7 “Administration and Management”

Author of the dissertation work: Maria Yosifova Tumbeva – doctoral candidate on an individual training within the doctoral program of “Business Administration”, NBU

Theme of the dissertation work: “Talent Management and Development (following the example of international companies in Bulgaria)”

Scientific adviser: Associate professor Dr. Dimitar Panayotov

Basis for submission of opinion: Order №3-PK-250/29.07.2021 of the Rector of New Bulgarian University, Sofia

This opinion meets all the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Rules of Procedure of New Bulgarian University.

Data for the dissertation

Maria Yosifova Tumbeva (b. 1982) has been an assistant in the Administration and Management Department at NBU since October 2019. Her academic career at NBU has been supported by 5 years of experience as a part-time lecturer in the Master's program in Management and Development of human resources”, and as a lecturer and trainer in trainings and summer schools. Gains professional experience in the field of training and human resources development, organization of the learning process at NBU, and client development (2008/15). Relevant to the topic of the dissertation research is the doctoral student's experience in the management of human tourism (Hotel Hilton, Sofia, 2002/04) and in a large company in the field of energy (CEZ Bulgaria, 2018/19).

Maria Tumbeva's educational portfolio is related to NBU, from where she has a bachelor's degree in "Administration and Management" (2008/10) and a master's degree in "Management and Development of Human Resources" (2010/13). The trainings at the Open University, Sofia (2009/10) and the Macedonian University, Thessaloniki are important for the subsequent educational and career path of the doctoral student.

The education and professional experience of the dissertation student find a "crossroads" in the field of management and development of human resources, which is crucial for choosing a topic for the dissertation research (PhD student at NBU, 2015/21). The combination of expert and managerial experience and knowledge, professional contacts and observations in the field of HRM are crucial for building qualities, including communication skills, organizational and analytical skills necessary for successful planning, organization and implementation of research. Obviously, the choice of dissertation topic is a result of the related educational and career paths, and in-depth research and dissertation are a logical result and stage in the search for complex and new for theory and practice in our country research issues.

General characteristics of the presented dissertation

The presented manuscript has a volume of 238 pages, of which 188 pages are the main text, structured in the following parts: introduction, four chapters and conclusion. The main text of the dissertation includes a total of 16 figures and 16 tables, as well as 16 figures ("diagrams") from ICF Bulgaria. The dissertation presents 5 appendices, which present the researched organizations, the questionnaires on which the empirical information is collected and a model (theoretical-applied frameworks) for talent management developed by the author. The reference for the used sources (pp. 193-205) includes 270 sources, of which 33 in Bulgarian and 218 in English, as well as 19 sources with a clearly indicated internet address. Of all the sources mentioned and used, only 10 (excluding those on the Internet) are from the last 5 years, which allows for an in-depth and large-scale literature review of the retrospective of the problem. These sources fully correspond to the subject area of the study and emphasize the importance of the topic, the theoretical and methodological nature of the dissertation. The serious efforts of the dissertation student to be precise in the work with the literary sources, the theoretical reviews and the analyzes, comments and summaries based on them are visible. There is a conscientious use of the knowledge, the indicated sources and the selection of the information. Greater attention should be paid to compliance with academic standards for the presentation of tables and figures: with precise and clear names, without repetitions, always with a correctly indicated source, identification of all those that represent authorial results. The approach taken to working with sources is to cite and refer "in the text". The summaries to each separate part (chapter) is an important structural solution for the dissertation. Together with the conclusion, which presents an overview of the results achieved in the study, they provide the overall picture of the work done. In connection with the theoretical and methodological orientation and complexity of the dissertation research, this decision can be assessed positively. The dissertation student has built her academic handwriting and style of writing, of understandable, logical, thorough and correct presentation of different points of view, their confirmation with scientific arguments, and the special attention and precision in the use of the scientific apparatus.

Relevance and significance of the topic

The topic of the dissertation clearly outlines the specific subject and problem field of the dissertation research - the management and development of talents in organizations. Probably due to the not very popular use of the term "talent" in a practical business environment, at first glance, the topic seems extravagant, special, original, concerning rare and unpopular cases. This explains, to some extent, the little research in our country directly on the topic, as evidenced by the publications and neglect of this issue, which can be seen most often its incorporation as an accompanying part of other traditional or more modern topics. The lowering of the veil of ignorance, which in fact makes the dissertation research very successful, reveals and emphasizes the importance of talent: it is the individual ability and competence realized in organizational achievements (and not just such, but strategic competitive advantages). Understanding and clarifying the functional meaning of the concept allows us to find its place in the modern puzzle of management - at all levels. Without ignoring the coincidence, talent requires not just the incidental attention of managers, but first, this key resource to be systematically managed and secondly, its growing importance today is a reason to redefine and completely reorganize the organizational management system itself. Talent management is a systematic process of finding, attracting, developing and retaining associates whose abilities and competencies play a crucial role in the strategic success of organizations. Talent management (s) is not just a separate part of human resource management, but its reorganizing basis, and hence to all areas of management.

The study of talent management requires theoretical thinking, differentiation of the subject area, redefinition of basic concepts, which in a sense means emancipation and overcoming the "shadow" of

other key topics for management, such as human capital. This does not diminish the importance of the latter, but on the contrary will allow, firstly, "adjustment to a way of (managerial) thinking, talent-oriented" and on this basis, secondly, the application of new and more successful management tools, "a wide range of organizational initiatives "In the battle for talented employees."

The dissertation student consistently develops this understanding in the research, clarifying and conceptualizing key theoretical markers, which helps to outline a relatively new subject field in our country and develops model solutions to help practical management. Against this background, the research interest in the topic is long-term and justified. The indicated projections of the topic (in theoretical and scientific-applied plan) determine the significance of the research (and the possibilities for application) of its results.

Justification of the goals and tasks

The main ideas and the general plan of the dissertation research are presented in the introduction. The detailed "scientific plan" includes: relevance and significance of the problem; degree of his research; main thesis; purpose and tasks; sub-goals; research tasks; subject and object; working hypotheses; methods; research design; research limitations; recommendations for future studies. The scientific problem (evident from the subject of the research) emphasizes the establishment and development of "practices and approaches for talent management" in our country as well as the possibilities for transfer of such from leading international companies (p. 12). This question is convincingly argued, and presupposes the plan of the dissertation (shown in detail in the individual elements of the "target network" of the study on pp. 10-14). The main thesis states the expected scientific result in two directions. The first is to outline the process of talent management in organizations by integrating the basic functions of planning, evaluation, development and retention of talent.

In this regard, the second focuses on building relevant organizational capacity through the applic Proof of the thesis is planned by studying the strategies for talent management in theoretical and practical terms, in 4 general directions (called sub-goals): clarification of (a) the essence of talent management, (b) understanding of this process at the organizational level, (c) sharing this understanding; and (d) management approaches (p.10-11). These 4 perspectives are detailed at the next level in 8 specific research tasks (p.11-12), indicated as processes (clarification, analysis, systematization, formulation, development) with a clear expected result. In t.sm. the tasks present the "work plan" of the dissertationation of specific talent management tools (p.10).

The individual elements of the "target network" of the study are interconnected and logically structured and can be presented as a "cascade" of sequentially detailed descriptions of the expected results. The goals, sub-goals and tasks are substantiated, achievable and relevant to the scientific problem and the topic of the dissertation research. The dissertation plan is carefully prepared; it is the result of long deliberation, it is thought through the prism of the existing scientific literature and the possibilities for empirical verification.

Methodology and research methodology

The research methodology follows the outlined in the target network of the dissertation (thesis, goal / s and tasks) "scientific task".

- The logical framework of the dissertation outlines the general approach to the topic and the sequence of the research. In the first chapter, based on in-depth theoretical / conceptual research, systematization of leading views and concepts of talent management, the dissertation complements

the "classic line" of research on the topic (human resources - human capital - talent management) and "assembles" a model idea. to characterize the overall talent management process on 14 indicators.

The second chapter provides a discussion and convincing author's argumentation in response to the question of how to explore talent management, ie. With what research approaches / strategies are they appropriate and with what methods. On this basis, in the third chapter presents a specific program and tools of the study, which applied to certain organizations and target groups provides profile characteristics and summaries of talent management in various fields in our country.

Chapter four focuses on building organizational capacity for talent management with an emphasis on coaching programs and the development of coaching culture, which culminates in a new author's methodological solution - a model framework / guide for talent management. Following this logical scheme is commensurate with the set main goal, tasks, and guarantees the goals set by the dissertation.

- A significant place in the dissertation is given to the design of methodological solutions relevant to the objectives of the specific study). The research (I use this term to distinguish it from research that the author uses in the context of the whole dissertation) is organized in 6 phases, the end result of which is the construction of a model framework for talent management (coaching culture). The working hypotheses (p. 13) are formulated as interesting and significant assumptions / findings in scientific terms, following from what was done in Chapter 3. research and provide the necessary scientific arguments for talent management through coaching programs and in a strategic plan to build a coaching culture.

- I admire the attention and precision with which the dissertation raises the question of (the choice of) methods for the study of talent management (Chapter 2). The recommendations and solutions in this area are the following: joint use of quantitative and qualitative methods; taking into account the role of the researcher; generating ideas in the logic of abduction; in-depth study of "case companies". Relevant research tools (surveys, interviews with leading support experts, case studies) are precisely applied in this methodological framework, which is a central condition for the validity of the survey results (Chapter 3).

In summary, the careful "architectural" composition of the dissertation and the reasonable assessment of the process and methods of research of management practices for talent management fully correspond to the main goal and research tasks and allow verification of working hypotheses.

Main scientific achievements (scientific and scientific-applied contributions)

The scientific results are indicated in the conclusions and summaries to each chapter, in the conclusion (pp. 187-188), in the separate reference in the author's abstract (pp. 57-58) and in the dissertation (pp. 189-190). A total of 7 contributions are indicated, grouped in two groups - scientific (4) and scientific-applied (3). From the content of ch. this division reflects rather the scientific innovations and achievements in theoretical terms and in theoretical and methodological terms, which corresponds to the predominant theoretical and methodological nature of the dissertation research.

I fully accept and confirm the scientific contributions mentioned under №№1, 2 and 4 (in section 1). They are a projection of the results of the theoretical analysis, show the ability of the dissertation for conceptual identification, classification and generalization, for conceptual modeling based on critical thinking of complex and debatable issues in the field of talent management. The theoretical analysis (especially in the first chapter) is performed at a high level with in-depth knowledge of the relevant literature. The author's participation in the debate is not intrusive and boastful, which requires more

courage in emphasizing the author's reading and interpretations on the category apparatus. The refinement of the definitions of talent and talent management leads to a new reading of key ideas in human resource management and human capital. The indicated 3rd contribution - for the developed author's methodology and recommendations for coaching programs is an achievement of an applied nature.

Of these "practical contributions", I fully accept the second, which summarizes "identified challenges and opportunities and trends of a predictive nature in talent management. In the first of this group, I confirm the part (second sentence) of the proposed new approaches and policies. The first part of this contribution is not a description of a specific scientific result. For the same reason, I do not find the mentioned 3rd contribution convincing and precisely formed, in which an (unsuccessful) attempt was made to outline the guidelines for the transfer of successful practices (through the studied international experience and "case" companies).

These results and contributions are the work of the author of the study. There are opportunities to expand and continue research.

Publications and participation in scientific forums

The dissertation is not published as a separate monographic study. At the end of the dissertation (pp. 191-192) and in the abstract (p. 59) are 4 independent publications on the topic of the dissertation in the period 2015-2018, which reflect the main points and achievements related to individual stages of research of the dissertation. Three of the publications are in academic publications - collections of scientific conferences (at NBU) and an article in the monthly magazine "Labor and Law". To popularize the results help the mentioned participations with presentations and scientific reports at 4 more conferences in the period 2015-2017, for which no bibliographic data are indicated for publication in the respective collections. No publications were submitted within the scientific jury procedure, therefore no review and substantive assessment of the same can be made. There is no data for citation by other authors, reviews of publications and research. The topicality and significance of the topic of talent management require a more intensive scientific presentation of the results achieved and convincingly proven in the dissertation, both at scientific forums and in scientific periodicals with wider scientific visibility.

Opinions, recommendations and notes

The dissertation is an original scientific product that proves the high professional competence of the author on the research topic. In the course of her work the dissertation demonstrates ability and affinity for in-depth theoretical analysis and generalizations, for correct selection and skillful use of modern scientific methods, for gathering and analysis of relevant empirical data. The dissertation reports a stage of long-term efforts in the study of the topic of talent management. The new challenge for the dissertation is to continue her research, to verify the methodology she has developed and to put into practice the recommendations. Given the lack of sufficient research and scientific literature on this topic, as well as the theoretical and methodological focus of the work, I recommend the subsequent publication of the dissertation as a monographic study.

During the pre-defense (in which I participated) and in the subsequent correction of the dissertation, a number of critical remarks and recommendations were reflected. To the presented dissertation I would like to note the following:

- The use of uniform (according to a common pattern) numbering of tables (similar to figures), following the academic standards of writing figures and tables, with a clear source and emphasizing

those that are copyrighted or with authorial participation, would contribute to the accuracy and the improved visualization of this part of the study presentation and results. The identification of the figures shown on pages 149-154, called "ICF diagrams", is unclear (see abstract, p. 2).

- Displaying the abbreviations used would help to get acquainted with the text;
- The lack of "conclusions and summaries" in the final part of the third chapter violates the imposed very good decision in the structure of the rest of the dissertation;
- As a more significant discrepancy, I would like to note that the course of the research and the presentation of the results in the text of the dissertation should be linked in content and visibly with the target network widely set in the introduction and especially with the specific research tasks and working hypotheses. Each separate part of the work contributes in this direction and through the results has a bearing on the construction of the thesis and the proof of the hypotheses. The sketch and the general confirmatory assessment of pp. 121 and 184 are not sufficient. The reason for this is that the formulated working hypotheses refer to the research in Chapter 3 (evident from p. 13 and p. 184) and the methodological apparatus of the hypotheses does not refer to the other parts of the dissertation.

These notes do not violate the overall very positive impression of the presented dissertation and the convincingly demonstrated qualities of a researcher by the dissertation.

Conclusion

The dissertation is an original research on a topical, scientifically and practically significant topic. Very high awareness and in-depth theoretical knowledge is shown. Skills for conducting independent scientific research are demonstrated - to pose a problem, to plan, organize and carry out research by applying valid scientific methods, the results of which are of high scientific and scientific-applied value.

The emphasized affinity of the dissertation, according to the set goals, for theoretical analysis and search of practically applicable methodological solutions, based on empirical evidence, obtained through relevant research tools, deserves admiration. I evaluate the efforts made by the dissertation as successful, and the results as scientifically valid. The main goal has been achieved, and the specific tasks set in the development have been solved. The thesis of the study is proven. Specific contributions of scientific and scientific-applied nature have been received, which are the basis for the sustainability

The above gives me reason to give a **positive assessment** of the dissertation. I recommend to the respected members of the scientific jury to support the decision **FOR awarding the ONS "Doctor"** in the professional field 3.7. "Administration and Management", doctoral program "Business Administration" by Maria Yosifova Tumbeva of the research and outline opportunities for development.

Date: 07.10.2021

Signature: