

OPINION

From: prof. **Valentina Lyubenova Nikolova-Alexieva, PhD**
University of Food Technologies - Plovdiv,
Professional direction 3.8 . Economy
Scientific specialty "Economics and Management" (Economics,
Business Entrepreneurship, Pricing and Pricing)

Subject: Dissertation labor for awarding on educational and scientific degree "doctor"
doctoral program "Social management" in professional direction
3.7."Administration and management ", scientific area 3. Economic social and
legal sciences at the department "Management and quantitative methods in the
economy" of FSIN, at Plovdiv University (PU) "Paisiy Hilendarski".

Reason for presenting the opinion: participation in the composition of the scientific jury
according to Order No. PD-21-1491 of 07/17/2024. The rector of PU for
opening a procedure for the defense of a dissertation.

Author of the dissertation: DIMO ZHELEV ZHELEV

Topic of the dissertation work: "INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON THE
MOTIVATION OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES
IN CRISIS AND POST-CRISIS CONDITIONS
PERIOD'

Scientific supervisor : Assoc. prof. MINA ANGELOVA, PhD

1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

In my capacity as a member of the scientific jury for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 3.Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.7.Administration and management, doctoral program "Social management", the composition of which is determined by order No. PD-21-1491 of 17.07.2024 of the Rector of the PU, I believe that Dimo Zhelev Zhelev - doctoral student in part-time study at the department "Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics", author of the topic "Influence of leadership on the motivation of hotel employees in conditions of crisis and post-crisis period" with research supervisor Assoc. prof. Mina Angelova has presented a complete **set of materials in paper format, according to the requirements.**

The presented set of documents is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of The regulations for development on the academic composition of PU and includes the following documents :

- *request to The Rector of PU for disclosure on the procedure for protection on dissertation work*
- *CV in European format ;*

- *protocol from departments advice related to reporting on readiness for discovery on the procedure and with advance discussion on dissertation work*
- *dissertation work*
- *abstract ;*
- *list on the scientific ones publications by the topic on the dissertation ;*
- *copies on the scientific ones publications ;*
- *list on noticed citations ;*
- *declaration for originality and credibility on attached documents ;*
- *order No. PD-21-1491 of 17.07.2024 on The Rector on Plovdiv university .*

The PhD student has applied four publications.

Dimo Zhelev obtained a bachelor's degree in tourism at the University of Food Technology - Plovdiv in the period 2002 - 2006. He obtained master 's degree by major " Marketing" at PU "Paisii Hilendarski", with qualification master's degree economist - marketing in the period 2016 - 2018. In the period 2019 - 2024, he studied part- time PhD student in the same university by doctoral program Social management. From 01.03.2005, Dimo Zhelev is the manager on Agency for digital marketing for the hotel sector, DRS - Travel EOOD, Plovdiv.

The PhD student owns managerial skills and competencies like manager on Agency for digital marketing for creation on vision on the company, recruitment and selection on human resources, creation , supply and implementation on successful services in the field on the digital one marketing in hospitality , management on processes, business modeling, relationship with partners and key clients , work with institutions and others .

Dimo Zhelev owns social skills and competencies . Participates like lecturer on national business conferences , on scientific conferences , and so on also teaches by " Software in Tourism " discipline .

Therefore, the doctoral student has an excellent basis for in-depth research work in the field of social management and good practices for its application in business practice.

2. Relevance of the presented dissertation work

The dissertation labor treats *extremely current economic problem* related to the study of the interrelationships between leadership and the motivation of employees in Bulgaria, in the conditions of crisis and in a post-crisis environment. Moreover, given the cyclical nature of the Bulgarian economy emerging from one crisis and entering another, the chosen topic acquires exceptional significance.

The modern business environment is distinguished both by uncertainty in a global aspect, justified by strategic events - global pandemic, wars, environmental, political, economic and other events, and by a qualitatively different internal environment determined by the new digital reality.

It is these dynamic and unpredictable changes in the external and internal environment in which business organizations operate that necessitate the use of modern models for their management.

In the specialized scientific literature, the issues related to the various aspects of management during crises are considered, with the priority given to issues related to the survival of companies and financial management. There is insufficient research on the different

techniques of employee motivation in crisis conditions, where a qualitatively new management approach and leadership qualities are needed.

In this regard, the study of the influence of the leadership style applied by the manager during a crisis and in the post-crisis period on the level of motivation of the leader's followers in business organizations is an extremely topical problem in scientific and scientific-applied terms.

It can be concluded that the topic of the dissertation was very successfully chosen. It is extremely up-to-date, dissertable and has great practical significance. The candidate has very well justified this importance and relevance.

3. Knowing the problem

The dissertation analyzes modern scientific achievements in the field of leadership, motivation and management of human resources to achieve competitive advantage and sustainable development in crisis and post-crisis conditions. In the list of used literary sources, **a total of 136 sources are indicated**, of which: **73 are in Bulgarian and 63 in English**. *The indicated literary sources are up-to-date and directly related to the topic of the dissertation work.*

The presented dissertation labor is in volume from **225 pages**, of which **197 pages are main text**. In structural attitude includes **introduction, 3 chapters, conclusion and 6 appendices**. The results are received through contemporary toolkit and are mirrored with appropriate selected **49 figures and 18 tables**. The appendices present the 2 questionnaire and card for determination of the leadership style and 4 tables with obtained results, including comparative analyses.

In the introduction on dissertation labor are formulated **the main one goal and five** logically bound **tasks** for hers achieve. Correct are determined the object and the subject on the study, as well as the main one **thesis on the author**, according to which about the discovery on clear dependency between the styles on leadership at crisis and post-crisis environment, characterizing with different level on uncertainty, will influence on the level on motivation on followers in business the organization.

The tasks are performed in progress on the research, and the formulated research this is proven. The structure on the dissertation research is logical built and conforms on placed purpose and tasks.

➤ In the theoretical part of the dissertation research :

The doctoral student has carried out a serious literature review and made a synthesis of theoretical foundations of leadership and its categories, characteristics of the external environment, crisis and motivation. Traditional as well as modern theories and concepts are presented, analyzed and systematized, revealing the essence of the studied concepts. From a scientific point of view, the model of relationship between the theories of leadership, crisis and motivation is of interest, justifying the logical relations between the structural elements of the categories. The systematizations and summaries made show *thoroughness and conscientious work with literary sources*, skills in applying analytical and deductive techniques for processing a significant amount of information with various research methods. Correctly, all citations and comments of the author are shown in parentheses, which makes it easier to refer to the cited sources. The author's participation in the discussions on the researched problems *is active and reflects skills to express one's own critical thinking and to formulate new conclusions and findings.*

➤ In the methodological part of the dissertation research:

The PhD student has chosen an appropriate methodology and research toolkit that matches the complex, multidimensional nature of the study. To prove the raised author's thesis, *the system and situational methods*, upgrading of already done studies, theoretical analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, the method of observation, experimental and empirical method, as well as descriptive, inductive, deductive methods regarding generalization and derivation of the essential characteristics are used of the basic concepts.

To achieve *the main goal and set tasks*, an assessment of expert opinions was used ; *graphical methods; sectoral analysis, statistical and other methods*. Among the field research methods, *questionnaire surveys were used* .

The study was carried out by means of a structured interview, and for this purpose a questionnaire was developed by the author, measuring the level of uncertainty of the environment, as well as the assessment of the leadership style from the perspective of the manager himself. With a second questionnaire, the level of motivation as well as the leadership style that characterizes their leader is investigated. In-depth interviews were conducted regarding the leadership style, the level of uncertainty in both periods, as well as the real problems facing the hotel.

I give a very high assessment of the literature review, the methodology used, as well as in terms of the implementation of the set tasks for the achievement of the research objective.

➤ **In the applied part of the dissertation research :**

The PhD completely correctly, applies the proposed ta in the second chapter the methodology for conducting on the empirical research. The results from conducted applied research: questionnaire field studies of leadership style and level of motivation are presented on one good level with sufficient by volume, scope and content evidential and analytical material.

The work contains specific results and empirical evidence which objectively reflect the real ones achievements on conducted scientific research.

The presented dissertation work is a comprehensive, completed research on a current and significant socio-economic problem. In the course of the research, the most significant theoretical and practical problems related to leadership and motivation were raised and discussed, on the basis of which a methodology was developed and tested for evaluating the leadership style in crisis and post-crisis periods. Based on the results of the conducted research, an applied model was successfully developed for the choice of leadership style by the manager in periods of crisis and post-crisis environment with the aim of increasing the general level of employee motivation. I appreciate the highly formulated conclusions, as well as the specific recommendations made to the hotel industry, related to the behavior of managers in crisis and post-crisis conditions.

Stakeholders of the research can be educational and training organizations for the purposes of professional training, business organizations with a different industrial profile, organizations from the non-governmental sector, state and regional authorities.

I believe that the results of the dissertation research have a high degree of practical applicability, therefore I recommend the project-oriented approach for continued development of the topic.

4. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions

Contributions can be divided into scientific and scientific-applied.

Scientific contributions include :

- systematization and enrichment of theoretical concepts regarding the categories of leadership, crisis, environment and motivation and on this basis a proposed model for the relationships between the elements of these theoretical categories.
- a conceptual model was developed, on the basis of which a methodology was created for researching the influence of the chosen leadership style on motivation during periods of crisis and post-crisis environment.

Scientific and applied ones include :

- the hotel industry in Bulgaria was analyzed, with the aim of comparing and contrasting the main indicators of the activity in the hotel industry, establishing phases of crisis and post-crisis environment.
- proposed an applied model for accommodation managers' choice of leadership style to increase employee motivation in environments with varying levels of uncertainty.
- conducted the first study of leadership styles of the hotel industry and the tourism sector in Bulgaria, according to the FRLM model.
- conclusions and specific recommendations to the hotel industry regarding managerial behavior in crisis and post-crisis conditions are formulated.
- *I accept the contributions as real, credible and proven in the course of the dissertation research.*

I consider significant achievements to be the personal work of the doctoral student.

The conclusions and proposals in the dissertation present Dimo Zhelev as an erudite researcher with good theoretical training, with opportunities for creative generalizations and formulating solutions for practice .

5. Evaluation of publications on the dissertation work

A total of 4 publications dedicated to the dissertation work, published in prestigious editions from participation in international scientific forums and conferences, are presented. **Three** of the four publications are co-authored. *The achieved o bsht number points is 35, at minimally required 30 points , according to the minimum national criteria. Like volume and quality them correspond on the requirements for acquisition of ESD " doctor " .*

I accept everyone publications like directly relatable to dissertation labor. In them are summarized and published essential problems and results from research in the dissertation labor.

6. Evaluation of the autoref

The presented abstract of the dissertation is in a volume of **32 pages** . It reflects the goals and objectives of the research, the emphasis of the individual chapters of the dissertation, as well as the contributions of the author. *The abstract was developed in accordance with the requirements for its preparation and reflects the main results and contributions of the dissertation work.*

7. Criticisms, recommendations and questions

- *Main opinion* : quality thesis, excellently illustrated, clearly outlined contributions with potential for development.
- *Critical notes* : I have no significant critical notes on the dissertation research.

- *Recommendations* : Given the relevance and importance of the scientific research, I recommend that the doctoral student in the future develop it into a monographic work and publish the results in the world databases Scopus and WoS .
- *Question*: According to the PhD student, does the lack of a strong leader affect the work efficiency, motivation and commitment of the staff in an organization?

8. Conclusion

Given the merits of the dissertation work, the topicality and complexity of the researched problems, the need to search for effective solutions for them in practice, the good theoretical level of the researched and analyzed problems, it can be summarized **that the presented dissertation work meets the normative criteria for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" /ZRAS/, The Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of the PU "Paisiy Hilendarski"**.

The stated results of the study dedicated to **"Influence of leadership on the motivation of hotel employees in crisis and post-crisis period"** provide sufficient grounds for a **HIGH ASSESSMENT** of the doctoral student's scientific potential and opportunities for research.

All this allows me **to vote POSITIVE with conviction for awarding Dimo Zhelev Zhelev the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in the doctoral program "Social Management" in professional direction 3.7. "Administration and Management"**.

18.09.2024
Plovdiv

Prepared the opinion:

/ Prof. V. Nikolova-Alexieva, PhD /