

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evgeni Rosenov Genchev, Trakia University
on a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree
"Doctor"

in field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

professional field: 3.8. Economics

doctoral program: "Marketing"

Author: Valeria Emilova Toncheva

Topic: "Impact of dual education on the brand image of vocational high
schools"

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teofana Dimitrova – Staneva

1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

Only documents from Valeriya Emilova Toncheva have been received for the current competition for the PhD degree. They fully meet the requirements of the Higher Education Act and the Rules of Plovdiv University. Valeriya Toncheva has submitted for review an abstract and a list of three publications (two of which are in press). The author is a regular PhD student at the Department of Marketing and International Economic Relations, in accordance with the order of the rector of Plovdiv University "P. Hilendarski" Rd-21-267/03.02.2022. The structure of the thesis fully meets the requirements for conducting independent research.

2. Relevance of the topic

There has been a clear and significant interest in this topic in recent years. The search for solutions related to dual secondary education is one of the most important priorities of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). It is positive that a comparative analysis was conducted with perhaps two of the leading EU countries in this regard - Germany and Austria.

3. Understanding the problem

Valeriya Toncheva demonstrated a thorough understanding of the field of study. The language of the dissertation is academic, and four research hypotheses are tested. The limitations of this study are clearly stated, both in terms of scope and the specifics of the activities of the affected objects. There is a correct citation of the sources used. Each chapter concludes with the doctoral candidate's conclusions.

4. Research methodology

The doctoral candidate used in her research the collection of primary information through unstructured in-depth interviews, as well as written consultations. She uses modern statistical methods to analyze the data.

5. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

The dissertation presented by doctoral candidate Valeriya Toncheva consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. I agree with the contributions in the three directions: further development and enrichment of existing scientific knowledge in the field of brand image, development of methodology for conducting research and interpretation of results, as well as guidelines for improving the image.

6. Evaluation of the publications and personal contribution of the doctoral student

Valeriya Toncheva presents a total of three individual publications that are in the field she is researching and meet the criteria. I believe that the personal contribution of the doctoral student is to accept this challenge in this little-studied field. I am also impressed that the literature used is extremely up-to-date and covers a total of 168 sources, many of which are from after 2020.

7. Abstract of dissertation

The abstract presented by Valeriya Toncheva has a suitable structure and fully meets the objectives and tasks of the doctoral dissertation.

8. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results

I would recommend that doctoral student Valeriya Emilova Toncheva continue and expand her research in this undoubtedly interesting scientific field. One could also consider conducting systematic studies to determine whether environmental factors change the image of vocational high schools.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation of doctoral candidate Valeriya Emilova Toncheva, titled "The Influence of Dual Education on the Brand Image of Vocational High Schools," contains scientific, applied scientific, and practical results that demonstrate her personal contribution to the field of research and fully comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRA SRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRA SRB, and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University.

This work provides evidence that doctoral candidate Valeriya Emilova Toncheva has acquired solid theoretical knowledge and the necessary skills to transform that knowledge, to develop, apply, and interpret a methodology for conducting independent research in the field of marketing.

Based on the above, I give my positive assessment of the entire dissertation, as well as the results and contributions achieved. I propose that the members of the scientific jury award the academic and scientific degree of "Doctor" to Valeriya Emilova Toncheva in the field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, doctoral program "Marketing."

May 28, 2025

Stara Zagora

Prepared by:

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evgeni Genchev/