

ОПИНИОН

From: **Prof. Atanas Georgiev Lyondev, PhD, HSSE, Plovdiv**

Regarding: Doctoral dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree “PhD” at High school of security and economics – Plovdiv

Basis for the review: Participation in the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation according to Order № 046/14.10.2024 of the Rector of HSSE

Author of the dissertation: **MSc. eng. Slavomir Artur Zavada**

Dissertation topic: **“Management Competencies at Senior Executive Level and Effective Corporate Management”**

1. Information about the Doctoral candidate

The doctoral candidate pursued studies in a free-form program in professional field 3.7. "Administration and Management" at the Department of Economics and Management at HSSE.

The doctoral candidate has fully completed his individual study plan during his training in the department of economics and management at HSSE.

2. General characteristics of the dissertation

Structurally, the dissertation is 237 pages long and includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and a list of tables and figures. The chapters are thematically connected and subdivided; the first chapter contains nine subsections, the second ten, and the third seven. In addition, a bibliographic list includes a total of 347 titles, of which 328 are literary sources, 18 are internet sources, and 1 is a legal source. The dissertation contains 44 figures, 8 tables, and 2 forms of measurement instruments.

The structure follows an established research approach in practice, starting with the theoretical foundations of senior management competencies, then reviewing approaches and current trends in the European Union, and concluding with an analysis of effects for effective corporate management.

The researcher's interest in the topic began with their own professional experience, holding various functions and roles, including in large enterprises. This experience and observations led the author of the dissertation to focus their research on senior business management, especially concerning the desired competencies of individuals managing companies. A literature review and research on the dissertation topic allowed the author to recognize a publication and research gap in top management competencies in enterprise management. This demonstrates the relevance and significance of the research problem addressed in the dissertation.

The object of the study is management competencies, specifically groups of competencies that meet the company's horizontal needs in this area and in-depth knowledge in these fields. The subject of the study is enterprises classified as medium and large firms. The main goal of the work is to develop a professional profile of desired management competencies for a senior management position. The author of the dissertation constructs the main hypothesis that management competencies are a necessary condition for functioning as a senior manager. The researcher also constructs three specific sub-goals related to the theoretical approach, financial indicators for measuring management competence, and a model of managerial competence. Based on this, the author develops three detailed hypotheses, whose confirmation is not only useful and necessary for verifying or refuting the content included in the main hypothesis.

In the research process, the author identifies the research problem, as well as defines research objectives and hypotheses. Challenges arose during field research. Additional problems emerged in the stage of gathering and selecting theoretical knowledge, i.e., literature analysis. Due to limited knowledge in this area within Polish literature, the author was forced to base the analysis primarily on foreign-language literature, encountering difficulties with limited access and understanding the intentions of individual authors.

The doctoral candidate used a literature review method in selecting and analyzing theories for the dissertation. The researcher references the general trend in management sciences of using not only quantitative methods (including survey methods) but also less common qualitative methods like Denzin's triangulation method. Alongside the study, the author obtained financial data, signing a confidentiality agreement with companies participating in the multi-stage survey. A total of 60 companies (40 medium-sized and 20 large) took part in the financial study. The researcher includes methodological limitations identified during the research work.

3. Evaluation of scientific and applied results

In the first chapter, the dissertation systematically and critically examines major theoretical concepts. This allowed the author to identify the level of managerial competency as a factor influencing the effective functioning of companies. Thus, the research field was formulated: the subject of the research, i.e., managers in senior management positions, and the object of the research, i.e., the competencies required for a manager at the third organizational level.

To build their competency model, the doctoral candidate used Katz's competency structure (illustrated in figure 11) or Multan et al. (in figure 13), considering social, strategic (conceptual), and professional (work-related) competencies. The model thus constructed serves as a reference for the researcher, who proposes a remodelling of the scheme to define the structure of competencies desired and possessed by managers in the research process. This enables the identification of competency gaps, with particular emphasis on competency deficits in top managers.

The second chapter is where the author details the dissertation methodology, justifies the choice of research questions, and describes all stages of implementation, along with challenges and constraints encountered in empirical field activities and during data reduction or analysis. The key question posed is not only about following a specific sequence of research but also about using triangulation of research methods through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Since the research subjects are medium and large firms and due to their dispersed and numerous nature, the researcher could not conduct a quantitative study in line with group representativeness, as this proved methodologically and scientifically impractical.

The result of the author's research is a senior management competency model, also known as a professional profile. The researcher bases the model on three groups of competencies: social, managerial, and strategic. Based on information and data analysis, the author proposes a model of desired competencies for senior management positions. The authorship claimed by the doctoral student for the research carried out in the dissertation, the specific author's style and the results obtained are grounds for concluding that they are his personal work. At the moment, within the scope of my competences, I do not find grounds and data for plagiarism.

4. Оценка на научните и научно-приложни приноси

The reviewed dissertation contains scientific and applied results, representing a significant contribution to both science and practice by positively confirming the detailed hypotheses, which also supports the main hypothesis. They meet all requirements under the Bulgarian academic staff development act and its implementing regulations.

The dissertation achieved the following theoretical and scientific results, contributing to the theory and science of management:

- Proposed competency model regarding the qualities desired in a senior manager, according to a 270-degree feedback methodology;
- Introduction of a modification within Katz's model, proposing a 20% increase in competencies across the three management levels, assuming a baseline of 100% at the first-line manager level.

The dissertation achieved the following applied results with contributory character:

- Selection of financial indicators that allow examining the relationship between financial performance and senior management competencies;
- The researcher assumes that practical knowledge is most crucial for leaders among managers, rather than theoretical knowledge obtained through formal education.

The doctoral candidate's findings hold practical value and can be highly useful in the business environment. It can be concluded that the candidate has fully completed the research tasks and adequately achieved the main goal of the dissertation.

5. Evaluation of publications related to the dissertation

A total of seven publications related to the dissertation were noted, including one in internationally indexed scientific databases, two in peer-reviewed journals, and four in edited collective volumes. The publications have achieved the required level of dissemination of the dissertation's findings in the scientific literature.

6. Evaluation of the Abstract

The provided abstract is well-organized, and its content corresponds to the dissertation's content. It reflects all significant elements of the work: structure and content, thesis, research subject and object, methodology, research limitations, scientific contributions, publications, and more.

7. Critical notes, recommendations, and questions

I have no comments on the dissertation.

8. Conclusion

The reviewed dissertation represents a comprehensive, original, and valuable scientific-applied study. It critically considers significant questions about senior management competencies for effective corporate management, which are essential for stable economic policy in European Union states. The entire content, conclusions, and scientific contributions justify a positive evaluation of the dissertation and support the recommendation to award the educational and scientific degree “PhD” to MSc. eng. Slavomir Artur Zawada in the field of social, economic, and Legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics.

29.10.2024

Prepared by:

Prof. Atanas Lyondev, PhD