

REVIEW

**from Assoc. Prof. DSc. Krassimir Todorov Todorov
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(VUZF) - Sofia**

of a dissertation for the award of the scientific degree

“Doctor of Sciences”

in Area of Study 3. Social Sciences, Economics and Law

Field of Study 3.8. Economics

Author: Dr. Norbert Zyczynski

Title: „Marginalization of sales chains and vulnerability to financial and image crisis in the context of the implementation of the omnichannel strategy”

1. General description of the presented materials

By Order № 28/02.03.2021 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University) Assoc. Prof. Dr. Grigorii Vazov, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for providing a procedure for defense of a dissertation, titled: “Marginalization of sales chains and vulnerability to financial and image crisis in the context of the implementation of the omnichannel strategy” for obtaining a scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” in the Area of study 3. Social Sciences, Economics and Law, field of study 3.8. Economics.

The materials submitted by the Center for Scientific Research and Doctoral Studies at VUZF University include all the necessary documents for the procedure:

1. CV in English language,
2. Copy of the diploma for the acquired educational qualification degree “Dotor”,
3. Dissertation in Russian language,
4. Abstract in Bulgarian and in Russian languages,
5. Summaries of the publications on the topic of the dissertation in Bulgarian and Russian languages
6. Reference for fulfillment of the requirements of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for application of ZRASRB, reference of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions.

2. Short CV presentation of Dr. Norbert Zyczynski

Norbert Zyczynski is a Bachelor in Economics and Econometrics from the Rzeszow University of Technology, Poland from 2006 and is a Master in Economics two years later from the same university. After his graduation, Dr. Zyczynski continued his education study in a doctoral program. In 2015, he defended his dissertation at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. The title of the dissertation is not mentioned in the CV. From practical perspective, for the period 1996 – 2000 Dr. Zyczynski had worked in the area of Information technologies in Austria. After that consecutively he is a CEO of two companies in Poland. From 2017 until now, Dr. Norbert Zyczynski has been a lecturer at the Rzeszów University of Technology, Poland.

3. Relevance of the topic and expediency of the set goals and objectives

The presented work is dedicated to a relevant and significant topic, which at the same time is a common for every organization – the distribution chains for retail trade as a particular types of the business.

The main objective of the dissertation is to analyze and evaluate the problems with the marginalization of distribution trade chains as a special type of enterprises, characterized by interbranch marginalization, which makes them particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation. An analysis is performed regarding the ability of such organizations to apply multichannel strategy and integration methods of traditional and online distribution channels, aligning them into a united and the same time multi-channel and transparent customers' service system. Within the scope of sustainable conditions, this strategy application allows obtaining and maintaining competitive position through contemporary technology usage that corresponds to the dynamic changes of the technological environment, leading to an economy of scale.

To achieve this goal, the following scientific hypotheses have been tested and confirmed within the performed research:

Hypothesis 1. Scattered trade networks as a special type of enterprises, characterized by interbranch dependence, are particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation.

Hypothesis 2. Implementing the omnichannel strategy can be seen as a proactive and preventive action that allows to obtain and maintain a competitive position.

Obviously, the limitation of the research is expressed within organizations, operating in Poland, although it is not explicitly expressed. Opposite to it, the subject of the research is well defined. It includes theoretical and practical aspects of the functioning of distribution networks within the context of their marginalization and manners of applying the omnichannel strategy. Different theoretical and empirical research methods are used for the solving the research problem, including supervision and the scientific method CATI. In the process of analyzing the implementation of an integrated multi-channel strategy, a study was conducted using the method of scientific

monitoring on a group of Polish commercial organizations, applying distribution multi-channel retail networks, based on their implementation, particular strategy has been identified and presented in regards to the good practices leading to a synergistic effect.

The dissertation work consists of 214 pages in total. The paper is supported with a considerable illustration materials - 56 tables and 77 screenshots from a specialized software, based on which lots of research questions have been visualized. The structure of the dissertation comprises introduction, three chapters and conclusion. About 130 references have been used.

First chapter is dedicated to present the evolution of the trade activity – from ancient times to nowadays. To some extent, first chapter is an introduction of issues, related to the normal functioning of retail business operations within the appearance of contemporary information economics.

Second chapter is focused to the term “marginalization”, as well as the author’s point of view, that classifies the commercial chains as particular marginal factories in the light of researches, indicating their marginality in various industries, however their volatility in difficult times.

The last, third chapter is dedicated to the author’s’ practical research, conducted to the level of multichannel strategies application in commercial distribution chains. This research presents a detailed review of the outcome from similar researches and especially focusses of the necessity of application of an integrated IS system throughout the distribution sales network, ensuring a basic support for such a strategy.

The analysis of the way of implementing the integrated omnichannel strategy is performed using the method of the scientific observation, a study of a group of Polish companies adopting distributed retail networks and at the same time serving sales from an Internet channel. Based on this, a proposal for the implementation of the multi-channel integration method is identified and presented, taking into consideration the best practices encountered during the study.

The chosen dissertation structure, with three chapters, ideally corresponds with the identified objectives and fully supports their achievement. Although the author has not outlined conclusion at the end of each chapter, in the very end of the dissertation, within 5 pages, he did his general statements and final conclusion. This is done is a logical consequence and in fact confirms the scientific contribution of the dissertation work.

4. Contribution and relevance of the dissertation for the science and the practice

Although, the author has outlined his contribution (two by two) in both directions: with a scientific and with a practical application, I would consider to be more useful in case it would be summarized in the following way:

The conducted by the author research allows to extend the knowledge for the conditions, having a direct impact over the vulnerability of commercial organizations during downturns, which allows to offer a new classification of these organizations as interindustry marginal factories. The omnichannel strategy application ensures a transparent sales integration, performed in various channels within the researched commercial structures.

5. Evaluation of dissertation publications

The applicant has submitted in total 25 scientific publications, following the subject of the dissertation, 12 of which are in English language. Two from the publications seem to be identical with monographies, as well as that only 4 of all publications Dr. Zyczynski is the only author.

6. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements

From the submitted Reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for awarding the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences”, which the applicant has applied, it is evident that these requirements are met.

7. Personal participation of the candidate for “Doctor of Sciences”

There is all the evidence that the dissertation is the work of the candidate himself, the result of his research on issues that are closely related to his professional experience. In my opinion there is no doubt of any plagiarism.

8. Abstract

The abstract covers the requirements for similar scientific work and illustrates promptly and entirely, however a little bit shortly, the essence of the dissertation work.

9. Critical comments and recommendations

The presented scientific work absolutely contains its practical-research contribution. The only critical remark refers to the fact that in today’s COVID-19 environment, which obviously offers considerable threats for the researched subject of the dissertation work, the reader has been left with an impression that those threats have not been analyzed at all. Having outlined this fact, I would recommend Dr. Zyczynski to analyze how the pandemic impacts the choice of the omnichannel strategy of marginalized organizations and after that to publish the outcome along with its dissertation work in a monography.

CONCLUSION The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meets all the requirements of LDASRB and RILDASRB. The presented materials and dissertation

results correspond to the specific requirements of the Regulations for admission and training of doctoral students at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance. The dissertation shows that Dr. Norbert Zyczynski has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in Professional field 3. 8. Economics, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research. Due to the above, I give my positive assessment of the research presented by the above reviewed dissertation, abstract, outcomes and contributions, and I invite the scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Science" to Dr. Norbert Życzyński in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional field 3. 8. Economics; PhD program "Finance, Insurance and Social Security".

08.04.2021

Sofia

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. DSc. Krassimir Todorov