

REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Victoria Svetlomirova Gatzova, PhD
from VUZF University – Sofia

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree “**doctor**”

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

Professional field 3.8 Economics

PhD Program “Finance, Insurance and Assurance”

Author: Nikola Dimitrov

Topic: Financial optimizations of organizations through Lean thinking

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Julia Dobрева

1. General description of the presented materials

By order № 50/05.02.2024 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Prof. Dr. L. Sc. Boris Velchev, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to provide a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic: “Financial optimizations of organizations through Lean thinking”, for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, PhD program “Finance, Insurance and Assurance” at VUZF.

The author of the dissertation is Nikola Dimitrov, a PhD student in an independent form of study at the Department of “Finance and Insurance” with scientific supervisor Prof. Dr. Julia Dobрева.

In connection with the procedure, Nikola Dimitrov submitted the following documents:

- Dissertation work in English;
- Abstract of the dissertation in Bulgarian and English;
- Reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in professional field 3.8. Economics;
- List of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation work;
- Summaries of the articles on the topic of the dissertation;
- The full texts of the publications on the topic of the dissertation work;
- Autobiography;
- Declaration of originality and authenticity.

2. Brief biographical data for the PhD student

Nikola Dimitrov has extensive professional experience in the field of lean management and optimization of business processes. From 2016 until now, he has been working at the Lean Institute as a senior consultant for a number of companies. He is a lecturer at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, and in the period 2019-2021 he was the director of the “Educational Activities” Directorate and the Distance Learning Center at VUZF.

The candidate completed his higher education at the University of Sheffield, where he obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Computer Science and a Master’s degree in Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The education and the work experience of the PhD student reveal consistency and purposefulness in his professional development and contribute to the in-depth study of the problem presented in the present dissertation and his publications.

3. Actuality of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and tasks

The research presented in this dissertation is interdisciplinary in nature, as it is the result of the intersection of two scientific fields - organizational behavior and financial management. In his dissertation, Nikola Dimitrov clearly presents the relevance of the researched topic. In today's dynamic business world, a major challenge, which is also a decisive factor for the success of organizations, is the optimization of financial results. The author of the paper introduces the construct "organizational chaos" through which he presents the complexity of structure, processes and interactions in organizations, and offers lean management as a tool for effectively dealing with complex processes and improving financial results.

The PhD student has correctly defined the main goal of the dissertation work, namely to investigate the role of lean management as a strategic factor for financial optimization in organizations.

The goal is skillfully operationalized by setting three research tasks that are properly formulated and detailed.

In my opinion the goal and the tasks of the research fully correspond to the thesis, raised by the PhD student, according to which lean systems and tools can serve not only to mitigate operational turmoil, but also to create an environment that is conducive to sustainable organizational growth and financial stability

4. Knowledge of the problem

In the dissertation work 192 sources in English have been researched and presented. The number of used literature is a sign of the PhD student's desire to seriously and responsibly research the problem. The presented theoretical information, combined with the in-depth analyzes within the framework of the exhibition, testify to the good awareness of Nikola Dimitrov in relation to the issues he researches.

5. Research methodology

The applied methodology is a combination of qualitative analysis (literature review and semi-structured interviews), quantitative analysis (processing and analysis of the data collected by the sample), comparative analysis, data triangulation and statistical analysis. The application of each method is also correctly indicated for the respective purposes of the work. The methods used successfully contribute to the achievement of the main goal and the confirmation of the research thesis.

6. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation has a volume of 152 pages, of which 24 pages include bibliography and appendices. The work consists of an introduction, four chapters, references and appendices. The balance of the individual chapters could be improved, as the second chapter is much longer (72 pages) than the other three chapters, which are between 10-15 pages.

A positive impression is made by carefully designed tables and figures that contribute to better structuring and visualization of information.

The first chapter, which is of a theoretical nature, introduces and defines the concepts of chaos and complexity in organizations. The interaction between organizational chaos, process complexity and financial performance is examined, paying attention to the role of leadership and the need for lean thinking in managing chaos.

The second chapter is a literature review of the problems of organizational chaos management and lean thinking investigated in the dissertation. The mentioned constructs are presented in depth at a theoretical level. The lean principles and their application in different organizational contexts are studied. Emphasis is also placed on the financial consequences of lean thinking in a chaotic environment.

The third chapter of the work has a methodological nature. The need to conduct quantitative and qualitative research to achieve the completeness of the collected data is

substantiated. The sample profile is presented, the research instrument for collecting quantitative data is described, and the interview process is discussed.

In the fourth chapter, which is empirical, the analysis of the results of the questionnaire and of the conducted interviews, the discussion and the interpretation of the obtained results are presented.

Structurally, there is a logical sequence in the development of the researched problem.

7. Scientific contributions and significance of research results for science and practice

I accept the PhD student's contributions to the dissertation and summarize them as follows:

- An in-depth study at a theoretical level of the constructs “organizational chaos” and “lean management”.
- Revealing the strategic role of lean management in streamlining processes, promoting organizational stability and improving productivity.
- Revealing the importance of lean management for optimizing the financial results of organizations.

8. Evaluation of publications on the dissertation work

In the reference for the minimum national requirements and in the list of publications on the topic of the dissertation, Nikola Dimitrov has indicated three articles on the topic of the dissertation, published in English in non-refereed scientific publications, and all three publications are independent.

I accept the 3 publications, presented by the PhD student, in non-refereed scientific publications, as they are on the topic of the dissertation work and meet the requirements.

9. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements

According to a check of the materials submitted by the candidate for the competition, it is found that there are 80 points. Therefore, I can conclude that Nikola Dimitrov fulfills the minimum national requirements for acquiring the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in the professional field 3.8. Economy.

10. Personal participation of the PhD student

At the time of preparing the review, there is no information available that would cast doubt on the authenticity of the dissertation work. The sources used are correctly cited in the dissertation. I believe that the results obtained and the contributions formulated are the personal merit of the doctoral student.

11. Abstract

An abstract in Bulgarian and English is attached to the dissertation. The Bulgarian version of the abstract has a volume of 68 pages, and the English version is 58 pages. It reflects the structure and content of the dissertation and presents the contributions, but I recommend reducing the volume, as the abstract does not need to be too detailed.

12. Critical remarks and recommendations

My remarks are regarding the structure of the dissertation. It is noticeable that there are too many points and sub-points, which create a feeling of excessive schematization of the presented information and fragmentation of the text.

I recommend that the PhD student include more current sources in his research.

13. Personal impressions

I know Nikola Dimitrov personally, because we are colleagues at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance. He is a good lecturer with a strong commitment to the learning process, who applies innovative approaches in his teaching activities.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific and scientific-applied contributions and meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation.

The dissertation work shows that the PhD student Nikola Dimitrov possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and skills in professional field 3.8. Economics, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree “doctor” to Nikola Dimitrov in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional field 3.8. Economics; PhD program “Finance, Insurance and Assurance”.

18.02.2024 г.

Reviewer: (s)
(Assoc. Prof. Victoria Gatzova, PhD)