OPINION

by James Borislavov Jolovski, Associate Professor at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, PhD in Economics

of a dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific degree **"doctor (PhD)"**

in Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

Professional direction 3.8. Economy

Author : Dobromir Donchev

Topic : "Creating a governance model of digital transformation of business entities in the digital economy through process mining methodologies"

1. General description of the presented materials

By order No. 135 of 22.03.2024 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Prof. Doctor of Law Boris Velchev, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to participate in a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic " Creating a governance model of digital transformation of business entities in the digital economy through process mining methodologies" for the educational and scientific degree "doctor (PhD)" in Field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction 3.8. Economy. The author of the dissertation is Dobromir Donchev - candidate at the Department of Finance and Insurance. Scientific supervisor is Assoc. Prof. Radostin Vazov, PhD.

The materials submitted by Dobromir Donchev include the following documents: curriculum vitae, dissertation, abstract in Bulgarian and English, declaration of authenticity, report on compliance with the minimum requirements, list and summaries of publications, list of contributions of the dissertation. According to the list, Dobromir Donchev has indicated that he has attached 5 publications on the subject of the dissertation work, of which 1 is co-authored.

2. Brief biographical information about the applicant

I do not know the candidate personally. Impressions of the biographical data are obtained from the attached curriculum vitae and from the attached list of publications that shows the interests and professional experience of Dobromir Donchev. The attached curriculum vitae shows that he has nearly 20 years of experience in various positions at multiple technology companies. Through it, he was engaged in digitalization of finance, business intelligence and data analysis, etc.

3. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work

To prepare the current opinion, I received a dissertation with a volume of 198 pages in Bulgarian and an abstract in Bulgarian with a volume of 49 pages, entitled **" Creating a governance model of digital transformation of business entities in the digital economy through process mining methodologies ".** The topic of the dissertation is undoubtedly up-to-date and of scientific and applied value. These circumstances are conditioned both by the dynamic development of the environment and by the intensive processes of digitization and the increasing implementation of more technologies to a higher degree in business.

The methodology applied in the development of the dissertation work is related to content analysis, carried out on the basis of desk research, comparative analysis, survey, analysis and synthesis, etc. In my opinion, the PhD student has not fully described the instrumentation of his research.

The total volume of the proposed dissertation work is 198 pages. It contains traditional structural elements: introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography, lists on the tables and figures and a glossary of the terminology used. The last element is especially useful, given the many terms that are specific to the field and in most cases are in English or represent abbreviations. The work includes various visualisations, which undoubtedly contribute to the presentation of more information in less volume and contribute to perceiving the main trends and messages.

The first chapter is entitled "Methodologies and best practices in the field of process research (process mining)". It is mostly theoretical in nature. As an introduction to the essence of the work, the features of the digital economy are briefly presented and various frameworks and models aimed at realizing digital transformation are presented. The PhD student then moves into the role of management requirements (business analysis) to enable this transformation, with business analysis presented in the context of different project management methodologies.

The second chapter is entitled "Project Management Policies and Models". It shifts to a more applied nature, taking a detailed look at the Extreme Programming and Scrum. A comparative analysis between CMMI and flexible models for the development of digital products (Agile) has been implemented. Data analysis is introduced as the link between business analytics and data science.

The third chapter is practically oriented to the highest degree, presenting the author's proposed model of managing digital initiatives through process research. It also highlights the main contributing moments of the work. However, in my opinion, the doctoral student should have presented more empirical data regarding the successful implementation of this model.

The conclusion of the paper successfully summarizes the key messages of the study and partially mentions the achieved contributions. Such contributions are undoubtedly found and the author has included them in the abstract, but in my opinion they could have been highlighted in the conclusion of the dissertation itself.

Some individual views of the author do not fully correspond to my personal understanding. However, I find them sufficiently and thoroughly argued in the dissertation work. For this reason, I could not accept that this circumstance has any bearing on the merits of the proposed scientific study.

4. Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice

The practical orientation of the work is indisputable. A number of studies on the subject are presented in a synthesis, which have been subjected to a critical analysis and have been evaluated. The contributions formulated in the author's abstract need clarification. Thus, for example, the analysis of "main problems and their causes in the life cycle of digitalization of companies" is not a contribution in itself, but a research method through which the author reaches a certain conclusion, which is the contribution. The citation in Bulgarian also shows that the work needs language editing.

I have no doubts that the dissertation submitted for consideration is a personal merit of Dobromir Donchev. I believe that the sources used are cited correctly. During my review of the work, I have not found any plagiarism in accordance with the law.

5. Evaluation of publications on the dissertation work

Dobromir Donchev has presented a list of publications on the topic of the work, which includes five materials. Their summaries are also included in the set of documents. In terms of content, they correspond to the topic of the dissertation work, and in terms of quantity, they exceed the minimum national requirements. To a certain extent, the publications can also be perceived as an additional factor that argues for the general validation of the work. It makes a positive impression that one of the publications is co-authored.

6. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements

From the attached abstract from Dobromir Donchev, it is observed that the minimum national requirements, regulated in LDASRB and Regulations for its implementation, for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor (PhD)" have been met. After familiarizing myself with the complete set of documents, I confirm that, in terms of quality and quantity, the dissertation work, the abstract and the publications on the subject correspond to the minimum national requirements.

7. Abstract

An abstract in a total volume of 49 pages is attached to the dissertation work. It presents the structure and content of the work, the main issues, the research methodology and the publications on the topic. Contributions are indicated in the concluding part. In general, the abstract is prepared in accordance with the requirements and established practices for similar works.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

Some of the critical comments and recommendations are also presented in the relevant structural elements of this opinion. The work is unbalanced to some extent, for instance its third chapter is of a substantial volume compared to the other two. In my opinion, a wider presentation of empirical data regarding the validation of the model proposed by the author is needed. In this regard, the contributions can also be reformulated and explicitly included in the conclusion.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science* and **meet** the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB. The presented materials and dissertation results correspond to the specific requirements of the internal acts for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

The dissertation shows that the candidate Dobromir Donchev **has** theoretical knowledge and professional skills in Professional direction 3.8. Economics, **demonstrating** qualities and skills for independent research.

Due to the above, I give *a positive assessment* of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and *offer to the honorable scientific jury to award an educational and scientific degree "doctor"* to Dobromir Donchev in the Higher Education Department 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional direction 3.8. Economics.

19.04.2024   Reviewer: ....

                                                              (Assoc. Prof. James Jolovski, PhD)