

REVIEW

by Prof. DSc (Econ.) Virginia Zhelyazkova
Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences / VUZF University
on the dissertation submitted for the award of the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences”
in Higher Education Area 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences
Professional Field 3.8. Economics

Author: Dr. Grażyna Kacicka
Title: “Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for the Formation of an Anti-Crisis Management System in the Entrepreneurial Sector under Market Economy Conditions”

1. General description of the submitted materials

By Order No. 131 dated April 11, 2025, of the Rector of the VUZF University, Corresponding Member Prof. DSc (Law) Boris Velchev, I was appointed as a member of the academic jury for the defense of the dissertation of Dr. Grażyna Kacicka for the award of the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” in Professional Field 3.8. Economics.

The submitted materials include: curriculum vitae, dissertation, and its abstract, a list of scientific publications, a citation report, and a report certifying compliance with the national minimum requirements for the award of the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and its Regulations for its implementation.

2. Short biographical data about the candidate

Dr. Grażyna Kacicka is a Polish scholar and university lecturer with an established academic and professional biography. She holds a Master's degree in Management from the Lublin University of Technology and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Łódź. In 2017, she earned her PhD in Political Science from Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine. Since the same year, she has been a lecturer and researcher at the Higher School of Social and Economic Sciences in Przeworsk, Poland.

The candidate is fluent in Polish (mother tongue), Russian, Ukrainian, and English, which she actively uses in comparative studies and participation in international academic communities. She is the author of numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals and has taken part in many international conferences dedicated to economic transformation and crisis management.

3. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the objectives and tasks

The topic of the dissertation is highly relevant as it addresses one of the key challenges facing contemporary economies—the need for adaptive crisis management systems in conditions of market instability. The author convincingly justifies the necessity of developing a new conceptual framework that takes into account global transformations (such as digitalization, pandemic shocks, and geopolitical crises) and their impact on the entrepreneurial sector.

The aim and research tasks are clearly and logically formulated. They correspond to the scale of the study and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the complexity of the addressed problem.

4. Awareness of the problem

Dr. Kacicka demonstrates excellent knowledge of the state of research in the field of crisis management and the entrepreneurial economy. She skillfully incorporates the works of leading economists and sociologists such as Keynes, Minsky, Schumpeter, Kondratiev, Hayek, and others, while also offering her own analytical contribution to their concepts. Particularly valuable is the introduction of original definitions and new terminological approaches that expand upon existing theories.

5. Research methodology

The methodology used in the dissertation is multilayered and incorporates a rich combination of theoretical analysis, induction and deduction, comparative and empirical methods, including econometric modeling and expert assessments. The author adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining economics, management, and systems analysis—fully in line with the complex nature of the topic. The use of the circular model framework “Cause–Effect–Measure” (CEM) is an original analytical tool applicable in various contexts.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation

Dr. Grażyna Kacicka’s dissertation is a comprehensive and in-depth scientific study dedicated to the contemporary issue of crisis management in the entrepreneurial sector under market economy conditions. The structure of the dissertation is clearly laid out, logically consistent, and fully aligned with the stated objectives and research tasks. The five main chapters provide a complete theoretical, methodological, and applied analysis, with each chapter building upon the previous one and contributing to the development of a coherent conceptual framework.

The first chapter lays the theoretical foundation by systematizing the leading economic and managerial theories related to crisis phenomena. Particularly impressive is the depth of analysis applied to the works of prominent scholars such as Keynes, Minsky, Kondratiev, Schumpeter, Hayek, among others, as well as modern sources from Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish researchers. The author does not merely cite existing literature but critically engages with it, comparing different approaches and concepts—demonstrating a high level of methodological maturity.

The second and third chapters expand the conceptual framework by identifying the factors that lead to crises and by formulating methodological approaches for their diagnosis and management. Especially valuable is the analysis of macro- and microeconomic aspects, along with the proposed models for assessment and control of various activities analyzed in the study. The application of models such as “Cause–Effect–Measure” (CEM) and the algorithmic structure of anti-crisis actions showcases originality and a strong practical orientation.

The fourth chapter is highly analytical, offering clearly structured methods for evaluating the effectiveness of crisis management systems. The author pays careful attention to the applicability of her models and provides well-reasoned arguments for the methods of control and early warning in risk management. The combination of theoretical foundation with proposals for real organizational frameworks is one of the strongest aspects of the work.

The fifth chapter is particularly forward-looking and timely. In it, Dr. Kacicka explores the influence of digitalization, automation, and artificial intelligence on crisis management. Concepts such as the paradigm of innovation-based adaptation and digital transformation in the context of anti-crisis strategy demonstrate a truly innovative approach.

The dissertation is distinguished by a rich empirical and theoretical base, a thorough literature review, a clear logical structure, and a stylistic and linguistic level appropriate for a work of this academic caliber. It may be recommended that future developments further strengthen the quantitative analysis by including more data from real enterprises or case studies, which would enhance the evidentiary value of the proposed models.

7. Contributions and significance of the research to science and practice

The contributions formulated by Dr. Kacicka are numerous and span both theoretical and applied dimensions, presented in a structured and coherent manner. A critical review of their originality and true scientific value is, however, necessary.

First, the originality in defining the term “crisis phenomena in the economy” and in developing an interdisciplinary approach to their study deserves high recognition. The author shows an ability to build upon existing literature by introducing new analytical categories and an innovative typology of risk factors encompassing macro-, meso-, and micro-levels.

The developed models—including the “Cause-Effect-Measure” (CEM) model, the control algorithms for organizational measures, and the concept of integrated crisis management—demonstrate a high degree of applicability and clarity. While some of these models are based on pre-existing approaches (e.g., SWOT or systems analysis), the way they are adapted to the entrepreneurial sector and linked with innovative technologies and digitalization represents a noteworthy advancement in the field.

The integrative approach proposed by the author, which includes tools of digitalization and proactive forecasting, is both timely and of practical importance. The contributions concerning the

adaptability of business structures and their digital transformation are particularly valuable in conditions of global instability.

Not all declared contributions carry equal weight—some are more the result of systematization or adaptation of existing methods rather than original scientific discoveries. For example, the refinement of the definition of the “organizational-economic risk management mechanism” can be viewed more as a terminological improvement than a conceptual innovation. Such cases do not diminish the overall value of the dissertation but do warrant distinguishing between genuinely new results and well-executed classifications.

The practical relevance of the dissertation is undeniable—the proposed methodologies and recommendations are applicable across various scales, from individual firms to public institutions. The CEM model and the proposed algorithms for crisis response possess high potential for real-world application, especially in dynamic sectors such as ICT and the agri-industrial complex.

In conclusion, the dissertation’s contributions are multilayered and substantial. They reflect the candidate’s long-standing research effort as well as the systematic application of an interdisciplinary approach and original methodology. At the same time, an objective assessment requires acknowledging that the strongest scientific contributions lie in the area of modeling and conceptual thinking, whereas some applied aspects could be further developed through empirical validation.

The overall assessment of the contributions remains highly positive. The dissertation certainly advances scientific knowledge and offers practical value in the field of crisis management.

8. Evaluation of the publications related to the dissertation

Dr. Kacicka presents 22 scientific publications reflecting the main results of her dissertation. Some of them have been published in internationally disseminated, peer-reviewed journals, including *Kyiv Economic Scientific Journal*, *Carpathian Scientific Review*, *City Development*, among others. The scientific output is impressive in both volume and depth, and it is thematically well-aligned with the dissertation. There is growing interest in the topic and in Dr. Kacicka’s publications, as evidenced by the citations presented in the reference report submitted for this procedure.

9. Evaluation of compliance with the requirements

The dissertation and its accompanying documentation fully meet the regulatory requirements for awarding the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” according to the LDASRB and the Regulations for its implementation. The work displays originality of topic, theoretical depth, well-founded hypotheses, substantive contributions, and academic maturity of the author.

Conclusion

Dr. Grażyna Kacicka’s dissertation represents a complete, innovative, and significant study with meaningful contributions to the development of science and practice in the field of crisis

management. I recommend that the academic jury confer upon Dr. Kacicka the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” in Professional Field 3.8. Economics.

12 May 2025

Reviewer:

Prof. DSc (Econ.) Virginia Zhelyazkova