



International Business School

REVIEW

by Prof. Ph.D. Sevdalina Dimitrova

Professional direction 3.7. Administration and Management,
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<https://ras.nacid.bg/dissertation-preview/14061>

Regarding: presented dissertation work for the acquisition of the Educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.7. "Administration and Management", doctoral program "Administration and Management (Business Administration)"

Reason for presenting the review: member of the Scientific Jury, according to Order No. 61 of April 2, 2024 of the Rector of the International Business School

Author of the dissertation: Stefan Djordjevic

Dissertation topic: "The leadership role in managing project teams"

I. Applicant Reference

In 2016, the author of the thesis presented for the acquisition of the ONS "doctor" graduated from the OCS "bachelor" in computer science at the Faculty of Electronic Engineering of the Niš State University, in 2019 he graduated from the OCS "master" - software engineer at the same faculty and in 2021 - Master's degree, specialty "Project Management" at the International Business School, after which he was enrolled in doctoral studies at the same university.

The doctoral student's creative interests are in the field of project management, which is confirmed by his professional experience as a project developer, software developer and project team leader. He speaks Serbian and English. Possesses the necessary software skills and working with Web applications, as well as interests in the field of economics and history.

The data presented in his autobiography are a confirmation of his potential and desire for future scientific development in the field of business management and, more specifically, project management, demonstrated in his dissertation work.

II. General characteristics of the dissertation work

Dynamic changes in the business environment naturally determine the applicability of innovative approaches to the effectiveness of modern organizations. The interrelationship of education-science-innovations provokes the creation of "integrated management systems of project-oriented organizations". On this basis, a relatively new direction in management arose, such as project management, to which scientific research in scientific knowledge is directed. The impression is that the principles of project management in project-oriented organizations are more widely discussed in public knowledge, and it seems that in countries of scientific thought the role of leadership in the management of project teams remains. This circumstance gives rise to a certain gap in scientific knowledge, which determines the need for a conceptual and structural solution to a number of basic problems in the field of project management. And this is in support of the topicality of the topic of the dissertation work and the scientific research of the doctoral student. Moreover, observations indicate that neglecting the team approach in project management with increased individuality in activities inevitably leads to conflicts and a reduction in the effective implementation of projects. And since time and resource factors are key to achieving the expected results for the effective functioning of project-oriented organizations, the approach of collective qualification and the role of the leader-manager in the management of project teams is needed more than ever. On this basis, the doctoral student formulates the research thesis arising from the need for a scientific justification of the linear relationship of project team management effectiveness with leadership skills and collective qualification, on the basis of which to reveal the potential of each member of the project team. The defensibility of the same is through the provability of the two research hypotheses formulated in the dissertation.

The reading of the dissertation is in support of the full compliance of the topic with the main content of the same. Moreover, the author has set himself the ambitious goal, based on the systematization and analysis of existing theoretical developments and shared practical experience, to make a contribution to the relationship "leader-project team" by identifying the factors of team effectiveness and innovative models of leadership behavior in a specific team business environment.

The defensibility of the goal set in this way is through the solution of the specified research tasks, the justified object, subject and subject of the scientific research, the applicability of the generally recognized scientific knowledge theoretical and empirical methods.

In support of the formulated research thesis and hypotheses of the scientific research, the author specifies the permissible limitations and the scope of the research searches and the verification of the answers to the research questions in support of their defensibility and provability. The results of the research conducted among 168 managers at different levels of management in organizations from the city of Nis and the city of Sofia in the second half of 2021 were analyzed. An innovative approach

was used for the preliminary selection of the participants in the specialized survey based on the results obtained from Patrick Lension's Teamwork Test completed. 120 managers and participants in project teams who achieved a test result higher than 6 points were selected for the purposes of the research, which guarantees the presentation of a real picture of team activity and the role of the leader in the management process. Specific concepts such as "multi-project environment", "multi-project organization", "project-oriented organization" are used, the content of which is accepted in the generally accepted literary context, therefore they are not treated as new terminological introductions. Techniques and tools for team planning, selection and development remain outside the scope of the doctoral student's research. Only those management mechanisms and methods related to the role of human factors and more specifically the key role of the leader in the project team and his behavior for team effectiveness are investigated.

A dissertation is presented to the scientific community, distinguished by the clarity and logic of research, with an analytical research style of exposition. Scientific solutions of a practical-applied nature are proposed for the role of the leader in the project team for effective project management in a dynamically changing business environment. The specifics of the analytical-research work in the dissertation indisputably prove the contributions of Dr. Djordjevic to enriching the theory, generating new knowledge and improving the practice of effective project activity.

In accordance with the formulated goals and specific research tasks, the chosen methodology and tools, the dissertation work is structured, following the classical structure. Structurally, it is developed from an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, sources used, appendices.

The achievement of the goal, the decisiveness of the tasks and the defensibility of the research theses and hypotheses in the presented studies and analyses, is in a volume of 186 pages. 234 information sources were used, of which 119 in Cyrillic, 100 in Latin and 15 internet sites. The content of the scientific work is illustrated with 8 figures, 13 graphs, 16 tables, 67 personal quotations and two appendices. The defensibility of the conclusions and results in the dissertation work is through a successful symbiosis of theoretical-scientific and practical-cognitive study of the researched issues, supported by the necessary evidentiary materials. This gives me reason to assume that the dissertation represents an independent and in-depth study of a key issue for project team effectiveness and effective project management in general. Results significant for theory and practice have been achieved, scientifically substantiating the role of the leader in the management of project teams, in support of the researched issues.

III. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results.

The proposed dissertation fully corresponds as a scientific development in terms of volume and quality to the legal requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor". The individual structural elements of the dissertation work are developed in a logical sequence, with the necessary analytics, applied adapted methodology and creation of a conceptual model for effective project activity with proven key role of the leader in the project team.

The scientific and scientific-applied results of the author's research are based on the in-depth knowledge and creative adaptation of modern scientific theories and publications on the researched issues.

The introduction of the dissertation work is a kind of algorithm for the organization and sequence of the research work of the doctoral student Djordjevic. The relevance of the topic of the dissertation is argued. The individual elements of the introduction are presented in a logical sequence.

The first chapter of the dissertation is a kind of theoretical presentation of project management. The essence of project management is explored, with the emphasis on the approaches to effective project management and the essential characteristics of the project. Teamwork is examined from its positions as a key factor for the successful implementation of the project. More specific attention in this direction is on the nature and role of the team, as a comparative analysis of work group and team was made, by justifying the differences between these two concepts. Management techniques contributing to increasing the effectiveness of team activity are clarified, and for this purpose the prerequisites for team formation, the factors affecting the development of effective teams are justified. The benefits of teamwork and ways to work effectively as a team are explored. The criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of teamwork have been systematized. Based on the systematization of the main theoretical propositions, the doctoral student's research supports the scientific justification and defense of the key role of the leader for an effective project team, and the first three specified research tasks are solved.

The second chapter is of a theoretical-analytical nature, as the conceptual framework of the specifics of the leadership role in the management of project teams is researched and analyzed. More specifically, the essence and characteristic features of leadership are explored and the concept of leader is defined. The main differences between management and leadership are analyzed, and the statement that not every manager is also a leader is scientifically substantiated. The problem of leadership and management styles, which in the context of dynamic changes in the business environment acquires new dimensions, is also explored. On this basis, the existing theories of leadership and the main leadership styles are systematized, the main characteristics of successful leaders are substantiated, leading among them are intelligence, initiative, self-confidence. The doctoral student brings out the main principles and approaches of leadership, guaranteeing the success of the project team, which is based on the search for a balance in the combination of skills, knowledge, competences, expertise with the motivation of the team members for effective and purposeful activity. In this context, the need for the leader's assessment of what management style to apply for a specific situation, which will ensure maximum synergy in the team and management by results, by revealing the potential of each member of the team, is justified. The fourth research task has been solved.

The third chapter is devoted to the empirical study and factor analysis of the influence of leadership characteristics on the effectiveness of team activity. On the basis of the analytical calculations based on the survey approach, the functional dependencies between the managerial skills and the management level of the manager in the project were revealed. The applied innovative approach to the selection of

survey participants, based on the results of Patrick Lencioni's teamwork test, contributes to the effective use of the expertise of the survey participants. On this basis, a conditional average level of managerial knowledge and skills is defined, allowing the creation of a profile of the participants in the empirical study through the relationship "leadership characteristics - effectiveness of team activity". The profile of the recipients shows a real picture of the demographic structure and state of the companies in the studied region. The predominant number of participating managers in the study allows for a real assessment of the attitude of the respondents to the problem of the manager's role in the overall organization of teamwork. Scientific research proves that gender differences do not have a significant impact on effective leadership management.

Factor analysis based on correlation dependences of variables allows the complete and compact description of the object of measurement, the factors being limited to a manageable and visible size, which allows to derive finite and comprehensible correlation relationships. More specifically, the knowledge of leadership management of the organization, the dependencies in the relationship "leadership qualities and team effectiveness skills" and an assessment of the degree of influence of managerial qualities on the effectiveness of team activity were investigated. The created model for factor analysis allows to determine: the degree of influence of managerial skills on team activity, the degree of influence of successful teamwork on leadership skills and competencies, the degree of importance for the effective work of the personal characteristics of the leader in the organization.

Regardless of the fact that leadership as an outcome dimension that is influenced by multiple factors, a circumstance that makes it difficult to build a universal model of leadership effectiveness, the main contribution of the dissertation work of PhD student Djordjevic is that the conceptual model presented by him allows the establishment of a lasting relationship between certain predictable leadership competencies enabling the development of leaders' potential in a dynamically changing business environment. On this basis, it can be assumed that the developed model is a unique framework of leadership behavior in the management of project teams. The fifth and sixth research tasks have been solved.

At the conclusion of the dissertation, the doctoral student makes summaries and systematization of the general conclusions and results of the scientific research, with which the dissertation is a complete and in-depth work on a scientific problem important for the theory and practice of project management. This gives me the reason to accept the claims of doctoral student Djordjevic for significant scientific and scientific-applied results and contributions, which I systematize as follows:

Scientific results and contributions

1.1. The theoretical positions related to the conceptual framework of the key role of the leader in the management of project teams are further developed.

1.2. Project management theory has been enriched by the proven direct linear relationship between leadership behavior and management style and the effectiveness of teamwork in organizations.

1.3. New knowledge was generated about orientation to a certain leadership style of management depending on the changing factors of the dynamic business environment, the form and value parameters of the implemented project.

Scientific and applied results and contributions

1.4. Empirical research was carried out on the basis of a selected innovative approach of preliminary professional selection of recipients, allowing the achievement of real and sustainable results and effective use of the expertise of the participants.

1.5. A conceptual model has been developed to generate and identify practical approaches and mechanisms for increasing the effectiveness of team activity by choosing specific leadership behavior and building positive personal qualities.

1.6. New impacts of known and defined problems in teamwork have been identified and an analysis of their relationship and power of influence with leadership behavior and applied leadership management style has been carried out.

1.7. A factor analysis of the influence of leadership characteristics on the effectiveness of team activity was carried out on the basis of the identified main groups of factors and their degree of significance and strength of influence affecting the development and improvement of leadership behavior in team activity.

The dissertation is distinguished by the clarity and logic of the research. The style of the presentation is logical, analytical, scientific research. During the course of the review, no cases of plagiarism occurred and I did not detect them.

IV. Assessment of received scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The scientific and scientific-applied results of the research carried out in the dissertation work are reduced to proving with new means essential and new aspects of existing scientific problems and theories. They enrich the theory of project management and expand the knowledge about the role of the leader in the management of project teams.

The developed conceptual model for increasing the effectiveness of team activity by choosing specific leadership behavior and building positive personal qualities and the factor analysis of the identified groups of factors and the degree of significance for leadership characteristics on the effectiveness of team activity allow the development and improvement of leadership behavior and the applied leadership management style, adaptable to changes in the business environment.

The results of the research carried out in the dissertation work represent the personal work of the doctoral student and outline the significance of the achieved contributions to the theory and practice of project management and leadership behavior. They can serve as a methodological basis for the further research work of PhD student Stefan Djordjevic.

V. Evaluation of dissertation publications

The results of the author's scientific research in the present work have been popularized in a number of publications in the country of a national and international nature, which is a confirmation of the consistent, in-depth, upgrading scientific research activity of the doctoral student Djordjevic. 9 (nine) publications are presented, of which 7 (seven) are co-authored with the scientific supervisor and 2

(two) independent, which cover the IBS for acquiring the ONS "doctor" in PN 3.7. "Administration and management", with the total point equivalent being 105 points, with a minimum requirement of 80 points.

VI. Evaluation of the autoref

The abstract contains the main problems and ways to solve them, indicated in the dissertation work. It gives a full picture of the scientific value and practical applicability of the achieved scientific and scientific-applied results and contributions, in support of the defensibility of the research thesis and working hypotheses.

VII. Critical notes, recommendations and questions

I have no specific critical comments and questions regarding the dissertation, but rather recommendations regarding the expediency of reducing the number of research tasks and increasing publication activity in the future in indexed and referenced publications in the world scientific database. The mentioned notes are of a technical and discussion nature and do not diminish the merits of the dissertation work.

It is recommended that the achieved scientific and scientific-applied results and contributions in the dissertation, if possible, become known to the interested structures and bodies, the rationality of which supports the effective project management of project-oriented organizations.

VIII. Summary conclusion

The dissertation work on the topic "Leadership in the management of project teams", developed by PhD student Stefan Djordjevic, is a complete, in-depth, structured scientific work on an extremely topical problem arising from dynamic changes in the business environment, containing significant for theory and practice scientific and scientific applied results and contributions. They are personal work and in support of the author's ability to independently develop important for the theory and practice of project management issues related to the role of the leader in the management of project teams. The dissertation is a methodological basis for future scientific research of doctoral student Djordjevic, for which he has not only potential, but also professional experience and a drive for innovation. The achieved scientific and scientific-applied results and contributions from the research of doctoral student Stefan Djordjevic, which are significant for theory and practice, and the proposals made by him, based on the above-mentioned qualities and potential for scientific research, give me grounds for **a positive assessment of the dissertation work**. I believe that it will be highly appreciated by the unbiased reader and can serve as a basis for future research.

The dissertation complies with the Law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the regulations of the Ministry of IBS. With conviction, I propose to the respected members of the scientific jury to award doctoral student Stefan Djordjevic the acquisition of the ONS "doctor" for the developed dissertation work on the topic "The leadership role in the management of project teams" in the field of higher education 3.

Social, economic and legal sciences , professional direction 3.7. "Administration and Management", doctoral program "Administration and Management (Business Management)".

15.05.2024

Veliko Tarnovo

Reviewer:

Prof. D.Sc. Sevdalina Dimitrova

