

Statement

by Prof. Kristiyan Stoyanov Hadzhiev, Ph., Head of the Department of Administration and Management at New Bulgarian University, Sofia, professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty Social Management

Subject: Submitted doctoral thesis for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the scientific specialty Administration and Management (Business Administration), professional field 3.7. Administration and Management at UNWE.

Author of the doctoral thesis: Stefan Djordjevich, a doctoral student on a self-study basis in doctoral programme Business administration at IBS (International Business School)

Title of the doctoral thesis: The Leadership Role in Project Team Management

Research supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Daryan Boykov, PhD

Grounds for presenting the statement: in the capacity of member of the scientific jury in accordance with Order No. 61/02.04.2024 of the Rector of IBS, Prof. Georgi Apostolov, PhD

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for the Implementation of this Act and the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of the International Business School.

1. General characteristics of the presented dissertation work

The reviewed dissertation consists of 186 pages and includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliographical reference and 2 appendices. The main text contains 16 tables, 13 graphs and 8 figures. In support of the exhibition, 234 literary sources have been included, of which 119 in Cyrillic, 100 in Latin and 15 Internet links.

The presented dissertation is dedicated to an exceptionally **topical question**, focusing on examining the relationship between leadership qualities and management style and the effectiveness of teamwork in managing project teams. It analyzes the intricacies of implementing leadership management within project teams and its correlation with the multifactorial conditions of the external environment, project type, and lifecycle. The study delves into the influential power of factors determining team effectiveness, as well as potential innovative models for leadership behavior within specific team-oriented business environments, utilizing appropriate empirical methods, techniques, and tools. Within this framework, the assertions, ideas, and proposals put forth in the dissertation possess practical applicability.

The dissertation work is **balanced**, the issues under consideration are presented in their logical sequence and connection, the presentation style is scientific, and the technical layout is excellent.

The goal and tasks are interrelated and consistent, fully corresponding to the theme of the dissertation work. The main scientific problem is correctly formulated, with its boundaries precisely defined. The research tasks, object, subject, and main thesis of the study are clearly and specifically stated. A methodology has been developed that is entirely sufficient for achieving the research objectives. The concepts and terms used in the dissertation are specified.

The literature used is as closely related to the dissertation topic as possible, providing a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the researched problem's state. Literary sources have been arranged and numbered according to accepted standards.

The doctoral student has analyzed and systematized a significant volume of literary sources on the topic, correctly cited in the text. Their own critical interpretation of the theses presented in them has been made.

The text is effectively illustrated with tables, figures, and diagrams, significantly enhancing its comprehensibility. The results of the scientific research are presented clearly, logically, and understandably.

From what has been said so far, it can be concluded that the doctoral student's utmost clarity on the aforementioned issues is one of the prerequisites for the high quality of the entire dissertation work.

2. Evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied results:

In accordance with the stated objective and detailed tasks, the structure of the dissertation work has been constructed.

The introduction of the dissertation encompasses all necessary components: a convincing justification of the problem and its significance; clear and precise formulations of the goal and research tasks; of the object and subject of the research; and justification for the chosen research approaches and methods. The conditions under which the research was conducted are identified.

In the first chapter, the doctoral candidate elucidates the conceptual framework, fundamental theoretical concepts, and relationships related to project management by analyzing management approaches and mechanisms utilized in practice, based on studies in the scientific literature on the subject. Emphasis is placed on teams in project management. Key prerequisites, regularities, and processes related to the design and functioning of highly effective teams are explored. Indicators of team effectiveness are specified, and the specific influences of various factors on immediate results are analyzed. From *the first chapter*, the extent of development of the research problem becomes apparent, and the theoretical foundation is established, upon which the doctoral candidate derives the main research thesis. The conclusions reached by the doctoral candidate are reasonable, supported by solid arguments. The research in the first chapter is thorough and provides the necessary basis for developing the methodology of the empirical study.

In the second chapter, the doctoral candidate analyzes the specifics of the leadership role in managing project teams. The essence of leadership in team management is elaborated in detail. The main leadership concepts and styles are examined through the lenses of situational and neo-charismatic leadership theories. The conclusion that emerges is that the effective leadership style is flexible and dynamic, primarily based on an adequate assessment, diagnosis of the situation, and prediction of future actions, i.e., it depends to a large extent on the individual characteristics and abilities of the leader.

The third chapter presents the conducted empirical research and the immediate results of the factor analysis of the influence of leadership characteristics on the effectiveness of team activity. The methodology and tools of the study are justified. Functional dependencies between managerial skills and the managerial level of the project manager have been analyzed. Specific conclusions and recommendations have been formulated based on the research conducted with 168 managers and members of project teams from different levels of management in organizations from Niš and Sofia. The approach to respondent selection is innovative and based on results obtained from Patrick Lencioni's teamwork test. This ensures higher levels of sustainability, reliability, and expertise among research participants. The statistical methods

used to test hypotheses and the functional analysis of the data conclusively prove the main dissertation thesis that the sustainability and effectiveness of project team management are in a linear relationship with leadership experience, competencies, skills, behavior, and personal characteristics applied in a specific business environment.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that in all three substantive chapters, the doctoral candidate demonstrates skills for clearly delineating and reasoned scientific defense of their views regarding the leader's role in the management and development of project teams in conditions of globalization and dynamic competition.

In *the conclusive chapter* of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate systematizes the immediate *results and conclusions* from the comprehensive research on the methodology and leadership practice in managing project teams in organizations. *Result of the dissertation research*: confirmation of the formulated **main** research **thesis**.

3. Description of scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The dissertation represents a *substantial scientific research* of a relevant and significant problem. The primary contributions can be examined and evaluated in two groups – scientific contributions and practical-applied contributions within the context of analyzing and synthesizing existing scientific knowledge in the field, concerning the criterion of **enriching existing scientific knowledge**. I fully accept the contributions formulated by the doctoral candidate. The list of contributions is compiled correctly and objectively reflects the scientific results achieved by the doctoral candidate. The contributions in the dissertation demonstrate that the doctoral candidate possesses in-depth knowledge in the researched scientific field and is capable of conducting independent scientific research and logically interpreting its results.

4. Impact of the dissertation work on the external environment

Nine co-authored publications in prestigious international scientific journals attest to the dissemination of ideas and conclusions from the research to a professional audience. These publications cover specific aspects of the doctoral student's work, meeting national minimum requirements and ensuring adequate visibility for the research findings.

5. Evaluation of the abstract

The submitted abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation work. It succinctly presents key aspects of the dissertation: general characteristics; content and structure of the work; scientific contributions; publications related to the dissertation topics.

The deposited abstract of the dissertation is 87 pages long (43 in English and 45 in Bulgarian). It is composed in accordance with the requirements, synthesizing the content of the three chapters in the dissertation, the thesis, the object, and the methodology of the scientific research, as well as the achieved theoretical-methodological and empirical results.

6. Criticisms, recommendations, and questions

No critical notes or questions arise regarding the presentation of ideas in the dissertation.

A recommendation is made for the doctoral student to consider publishing their research as a monograph to reach a broader audience.

7. Conclusion

The presented dissertation demonstrates that the author possesses profound knowledge in the researched area. The dissertation's topic is relevant and significant in both scientific and practical aspects. It is a fully completed scientific and practical investigation that meets the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff Act, the Regulations for its

Implementation, as well as the internal regulatory framework of the Ministry of Education and Science for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor." In their research, the doctoral candidate showcases the *ability to conduct independent scientific research and obtain specific scientific and scientifically-applied results and contributions*.

Based on these considerations, I am inclined to provide **a favorable evaluation of the dissertation** and recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury that **they confer upon Stefan Djordjevic the educational and scientific title of Doctor in the field of Business Administration, within professional direction 3.7 Administration and Management.**

Sofia,
15th May, 2024

Signature:

/Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD/