

OPINION

by Prof. Virginia Ivanova Zhelyazkova, DSc, Ph.D.

from the Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences/
VUZF – Sofia

regarding the procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree
"Philosophiae Doctor"

in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,

professional field 3.7. Administration and Management,

scientific major (doctoral program) "Administration and Management

(Business Administration)"

Topic of the dissertation: "Development of Functional Strategies in Public Sector Organizations (Based on the Example of Burgas Municipality)"

Author: doctoral candidate Bozhidar Babadzhanov

1. General description of the procedure and the submitted materials

By order 224/05.11.2024 of the Rector of the International Business School Prof. Georgi Apostolov, Ph.D., I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury for ensuring a procedure for public defense of the dissertation of doctoral candidate Bozhidar Babadzhanov with the topic: "Development of Functional Strategies in Public Sector Organizations (Based on the Example of Burgas Municipality)" in the Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field (PF) 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific major (doctoral program) "Administration and Management (Business Administration)" for awarding the educational and scientific degree (OSD) "Philosophiae Doctor" (Ph.D.).

The materials submitted by doctoral candidate Babadzhanov include the following documents:

1. Autobiography;

2. Dissertation for awarding Ph.D. degree and an abstract to it in Bulgarian and English languages;
3. Certificate of fulfillment of the national minimum requirements for awarding the Ph.D. degree;
4. Information about the doctoral candidate's scientific publications;
5. Reference to the scientific contributions of the doctoral student.

The documents are submitted in a neat form, which speaks of the discipline of the candidate and facilitates the work of the scientific jury.

2. Brief description and evaluation of the dissertation work

The topic of the dissertation is invariably important - the issue of the successful functioning of the municipal administration is key to ensuring a better quality of life and more opportunities and for the implementation of business ideas not only for our country, but also for any other. The choice of the municipality of Burgas as the main subject of analysis is very appropriate given its strategic importance for Bulgaria from both a geographical and an economic point of view. The well-defined research thesis deserves attention: "The role and place of functional strategies as documents regulating the policy of local authorities in various areas is insufficiently realized, and the practice is underdeveloped to the necessary degree of correspondence to the public interest and scientific achievements.", as it sets the stage for directly addressing within the work of a serious problem that is observed in the functioning of Bulgarian municipalities, and which is an obstacle to their faster and more successful development.

The dissertation consists of a total of 227 pages, of which 213 pages are the main text, the rest are appendices. Structurally, the text is divided into an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The appropriate and logical arrangement of the individual parts of the work is very well done, which speaks of the deep knowledge of the research problem on the part of the doctoral student. The foreword clearly introduces the topic; the object, subject and tasks of the work are defined very well and this shows the depth of the doctoral student. The chosen methodology is predominantly from the field of qualitative analysis and this is suitable for realizing the goals of the study. The main limiting conditions of the work on the chosen topic are correctly presented.

The first chapter has an introductory character to the topic. Within its framework, the doctoral candidate presents some foundational principles in the field of developing functional strategies in the public sector and planning in municipal organizations in general. The focus of the second, most significant in terms of volume, chapter is on the key issues of functional analysis in the municipality of Burgas, chosen for research by the doctoral candidate. A content analysis of the strategies and programs of the municipality is made and a reference model for developing functional strategies in municipalities is proposed. In the third, last chapter, the doctoral candidate presents and critically analyzes some inconsistencies he has identified in developing functional strategies in the Burgas municipal administration and presents some good foreign practices that could be used as an example by Bulgarian municipalities.

The inferences reached by the author in his work are very well presented within the framework of the conclusion, which clearly shows that he has proven his thesis.

3. Evaluation of the dissertation abstract

The dissertation abstract has a total volume of 54 pages and correctly presents the main points of the dissertation in a relatively concise form. It has been prepared according to the accepted academic practices for such scientific research and gives a good idea of the achieved results within the framework of the dissertation.

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

The main contribution of the dissertation of doctoral student Babadzhanov is in shedding light on key problems facing the functioning of municipalities in Bulgaria and specifically that of Burgas. This is the first and most important step before implementing a strategy and measures to overcome the challenges. The doctoral student also presents his own reference model for developing functional strategies in the public sector, which will be of assistance to the work of municipalities. In this sense, his contributions are undeniable and are of a clearly practical and applied nature.

5. Assessment of the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements and the authenticity of the candidate's works

From the documentation submitted for the purposes of the procedure, it is evident that doctoral candidate Babadzhanov exceeds the national minimum requirements set out in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. He is the author of a total of 10

scientific publications - 1 study, 2 articles and 7 scientific reports, which he has developed over the years in the field of the topic of his dissertation work. These demonstrate his commitment to the issue, his in-depth knowledge and his scientific activity. At the moment, there is no information that would put the authenticity of his works in doubt.

6. Critical remarks, recommendations and questions

I have the following recommendations - the objectives of the research should be more clearly highlighted in the introduction and the abstract should be shorter, within 30 to 35 pages, given the total volume of the work.

I have the following questions for Ph.D. candidate Babadzhanov:

1. What should be done to develop the municipality of Burgas more intensively? We see the example of Constanta in neighboring Romania, which in a short time managed to attract serious investors and become a key port.
2. What is the role of supporting higher education on the territory of the city for its development?

7. Personal impressions

I do not know the Ph.D. candidate personally, but from his dissertation and the documents submitted for the competition, I have a very good impression of him as a person who is truly interested in the topic of the development of municipalities in Bulgaria, and who is at the same time an organized, disciplined and active researcher.

CONCLUSION

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the presented dissertations, scientific articles and reports, achieved results and contributions, and vote positively for the award of the Ph.D. degree in the Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences; PF 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific major (doctoral program) "Administration and Management (Business Administration)" at the International Business School of Bozhidar Babadzhanov.

17.12.2024 Reviewer:

(Prof. Virginia Zhelyazkova, DSc, Ph.D.)