

## OPINION

By: *Prof. Dr. Mariyana Toneva Kuzmanova, PhD*  
*University of National and World Economy, Sofia city*  
*Scientific specialty "Social Management"*

Subject: dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree **"Doctor"** in the scientific specialty "Administration and management (Business administration)", professional direction 3.7 Administration and management, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences.

*Author of the dissertation:* Rumyana Lyubomirova Antova

*Topic of the dissertation:* "Communication policy and training in a digital environment (following the example of vocational high schools)"

**Grounds** for presenting the opinion: participation in the composition of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation according to the Order of the Rector of the International Higher Business School No. 02/ 07.01.2025.

### **1. Information about the doctoral student**

Rumyana Lyubomirova Antova educated in a doctoral program of the International higher business school during the period 2022-2025 as a doctoral student in self-educational form of training. She has extensive pedagogical experience at the Elisaveta Vazova vocational high school of design.

### **2. General characteristic of the presented dissertation work**

A leading trend in education in the recent years is the digitization of the learning process. Against this background, effective communications become a key factor for success and increasing the results of educational activities. That is why the issues studied in the dissertation are current and significant for the theory and practice of management with an emphasis on the effectiveness of education in vocational high schools.

The dissertation was developed in a volume of 180 pages. Its structure includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, references (107 sources), links, appendices (3 in number), lists of tables and figures, and a list of abbreviations.

In the introduction, the author argues the relevance of the issues studied in the dissertation. On this basis, the object, the subject, the goal and the research tasks were formulated. On p. 8, the research thesis is indicated: "... digitization of education and the replacement of conventional methods of communication at the various educational levels in vocational high schools is an opportunity to improve its quality in accordance with European and world standards". Various quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the dissertation: surveys, interviews of teachers and students, etc. The limitations related to the conducted research are pointed out.

### **3. Assessment of the scientific and scientific and applied results**

The *first chapter* presents the theoretical and methodological foundations of the communication policy in vocational education and training. The nature and development of the concept of communication with an emphasis on internal communications have been analyzed. A special place in the exhibition is given to the organization of training in a digital environment.

Highly appreciates the *second chapter* of the dissertation dedicated to the empirical survey and its results. The author demonstrates a very good knowledge of the object of study, as well as the approaches and methods of research. 198 teachers were surveyed, 63 of them were interviewed. In addition, 339 students filled out surveys. One of the hypotheses was rejected and the other was proven.

In the *third chapter* innovative techniques are systematized when training in a digital environment. Virtual and visual pedagogical communications are compared. The use of

information and communication technologies for establishing of competencies in the learning process has been discovered in depth. The last part of this chapter is dedicated to hybrid training as an innovative form of pedagogical communication.

The *conclusion* is systematized by the results achieved in the dissertation and outlined prospects for future research. The author proves the need for digitalization to increase the effectiveness of pedagogical communication and for changes in the methods and means of implementation.

The reviewed dissertation is distinguished by a logically correctly formed structure. Based on this, the author successfully achieves the goal and solves the research tasks, related to it. Thanks to its comprehensive theoretical training and very good knowledge of the object of study, the doctoral student develops a thorough and current dissertation in the field of communication policy and learning in a digital environment, following the example of vocational high schools.

#### **4.Evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

I accept the scientific and scientific-applied contributions indicated by the doctoral student, namely:

1. The types of communication in vocational high schools are systematized and the interaction between organizational culture, emotional intelligence and the effectiveness of the communication process is presented.
2. An empirical study was conducted related to the analysis of the impact of digitalization on the communication processes and their effectiveness in vocational high schools.
3. Recommendations for improving the communication policies in vocational high schools and their effectiveness in a digital environment have been formulated.
4. The quality of communication policies and processes in vocational high schools in the conditions of digitalization was analyzed.

5. The need for a better supportive and effective school environment and for increasing the digital literacy of students and teachers with a view to achieving higher competitiveness on the European and international labor market of Bulgarian citizens is argued.

### **5. Evaluation of the publications, related to the dissertation**

Four publications on the topic of the dissertation are presented, one of which co-authored. They reflect important aspects and results of the dissertation survey.

### **6. Evaluation of the auto-abstract**

The abstract was developed according to the accepted standards in a volume of 38 pages. It adequately presents the structure and content of the dissertation work, including the achieved results.

### **7. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

I have no critical notes to the dissertation survey. I would recommend the author to focus his efforts on publishing the results of future research in the field of the considered issue in prestigious scientific publications.

### **8. Conclusion**

The reviewed dissertation work on "**Communication policy and learning in a digital environment (on the example of vocational high schools)**" represents an independent and up-to-date scientific study dedicated to problems, which are significant for management theory and practice. On this basis, thanks to his research skills, the author gives original and reasoned solutions.

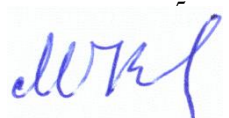
That is why I express my positive opinion and propose to the scientific jury to award *Rumyana Lubomirova Antova* an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the doctoral program "Administration and Management (Business Administration)", professional direction 3.7 Administration and Management, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal

sciences.

Sofia, 11/02/2025

Signature: .....

/Prof. M. Kuzmanova, PhD/

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'MK' or similar, located at the bottom right of the page.