

## REVIEW

**Regarding:** evaluation of a dissertation work for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in a professional field 3.8. Economics, Doctoral Program "Economics and Management (Industry)"

**Reviewer:** Prof. Dr. Lyubcho Varametzov, Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" at the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov

**Author of the dissertation:** Boyan Dimitrov Vranchev, part-time doctoral student at the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" at the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov", Svishtov.

**Dissertation topic:** "Opportunities for improving the management of project teams in industrial enterprises"

**Reason for writing the review:** order No. 1191/15.12.2023 of the Rector of the Academy of Economics, which confirmed the composition of the scientific jury, as well as the decision of the scientific jury at the first meeting held on 20.12.2023.

**I. Information about the doctoral student:** doctoral student Boyan Dimitrov Vranchev was born on 18.12.1981 in Pazardzhik. He completed his secondary education at the mathematics high school in his hometown, and his higher education at UNWE, Sofia, majoring in "Accounting and Control" (Bachelor), "International Economic Relations" and Accounting and Control with a specialization in "Financial Control" (Master). He also studied at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, the Vienna University of Economics and Business and the Leadership Academy Baden-Württemberg, Germany. He has extensive professional experience gained in Bulgarian and foreign companies. He speaks German, Russian and English. He currently works at Real Garant Versicherung AG, Vienna as an IT Solution Architect.

Doctoral student Boyan Dimitrov Vranchev, according to Order No. 1167/18.12.2019 of the Rector of the Academy of Economics, has been enrolled in doctoral studies, part-time form of study, starting from 01.01.2020, with a study period of 4 years. He has been exmatriculated with the right to defense by decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Manufacturing and Commercial Business (Protocol No. 4/13.12.23).

## II. General characteristics of the dissertation

Research interest in the topic of design activity has been sustained over the past decades. The project-oriented approach is applied by entities of different size and economic activity. Noting that "the success of projects depends on good management of project activity and, in particular, on adequate management of project teams", the author focuses his research interest on the management of project teams, seeking to uncover opportunities for improving its management. It is important to note that doctoral student Vranchev expands the framework of the subject of project activity and its management to include important aspects of management activity such as leadership and development of project teams.

The relevance and importance of the study are undeniable - "project activity and project teams are becoming an important factor for the success of industrial enterprises and for the achievement of their goals", and the project-oriented approach applied by them "generates a number of synergistic effects, provides opportunities for optimal and efficient use of resources, cost reduction and productivity increase...". Placing the emphasis of his research on the



opportunities for improving the management of project teams, the author rightly notes that "the ability to effectively use the totality of professional and personal qualities, social skills and business interactions; to manage time; to organize the execution of activities and tasks; to achieve synergistic effects of organizational and managerial characteristics such as adaptability, reliability, responsibility, empathy" has become essential today.

The management of project teams is the object of research in the peer-reviewed dissertation, and its subject - the potential opportunities for improving this management in industrial enterprises. The author defines the aim of the dissertation as "to investigate and reveal the opportunities for improving the management of project teams in industrial enterprises", specifying that the focus is on the managerial aspects of project teams, the problems and challenges that accompany the work of project teams, as well as the factors affecting the opportunities for effective and successful management of project teams. In order to achieve the above objective, several research tasks are stated. The doctoral student defends the thesis that "The management of project teams can be improved by enhancing the knowledge, skills and competencies of project team members, and by considering the influence of factors associated with project activity". To prove it, three hypotheses are considered.

The total length of the thesis is 207 pages and includes a title page, table of contents, lists of tables, list of figures, introduction, three main parts (chapters I, II and III), conclusion and recommendations, sources used and appendices. The length of the dissertation meets the generally accepted requirements for the length of this type of research. The main parts of the dissertation are interrelated and developed in a logical sequence. The author makes extensive use of extra-textual components (5 tables, 35 figures, 2 appendices), facilitating the reader's perception of the ideas and content of the dissertation. The doctoral student has listed a total of 168 sources used, including web resources. Appendices are placed at the end of the dissertation, thus making the content in the main parts easier to perceive and make sense of. The author has also provided a declaration of originality of the work.

Doctoral student Vranchev uses quantitative and qualitative research approaches (historical, descriptive, systematic, structural, target, functional, cluster, etc.), various scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, documentary analysis, content analysis, secondary data analysis, bibliography, observation, interviewing, consulting, comparison, induction and deduction, logical method, statistical analysis, etc.), various models, techniques and tools for scientific research. For the purpose of the empirical study, primary data was collected by conducting surveys and interviews. The constraints introduced (in terms of object, subject and period of study) outline the overall conceptual framework of the study.

The dissertation contains scientific and applied results, which will be discussed later, and is a proof of the author's theoretical knowledge and ability to conduct independent scientific research. Its form and volume meet the requirements of Article 27, paragraph 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

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

The author has chosen a structure of the dissertation work with three main parts. In the introduction, the actuality and practical significance of the research are highlighted, the object, the subject, the goal, the tasks and the research thesis and hypotheses are defined. Chapter one is entirely theoretical in nature. The doctoral student examines different definitions of the



concept of "project", presenting his working definition: a project is "a specific task that is solved within a certain period of time with the necessary processes and coordinated activities, with the aim of achieving a certain result under predetermined parameters".

The project characteristics are outlined, the parameters of the "project" system are identified, with the clarification that a change in a given parameter creates a need for changes in the other parameters of the system as well. The exposition regarding the classification of the projects, in view of the topic and the purpose of the dissertation work, I consider too detailed.

The analytical review of the theoretical statements about the nature of the project team, the types of teams and the optimal number of members of the project team ends with the conclusion that the size of the team depends on the type of the project and its characteristics, and the decision on the appropriate size of the project team needs to be taken on a case by case basis as it is too individual. As noted above, the author broadens the scope of project activity to include issues of leadership and team development.

In this part of the dissertation, he describes the various models of team development that emphasize different aspects of team characteristics and parameters, presenting specific explanations for the causes or drivers driving teams to subsequent positive change. Special attention is also paid to leadership, and according to the author, the best option when managing a project team is to combine the head and the leader in the person of the project manager. Examining the main directions of the theory of project management, the doctoral student notes that the research is mostly theoretical in nature, and the practical-applied aspect is almost absent.

In this part of the thesis, the exposition concerning the different organizational-management structures (linear, functional, matrix) is redundant or can be presented more sparingly.

In the **second** chapter, in line with the set goal of the research and the topic of the dissertation, the doctoral student examines the issue of improving the management of project teams.

Emphasizing the role and importance of the project team in the implementation of the project activity, he correctly concludes that not only the good/quality implementation of the project in accordance with the set goals, but also the potential for the implementation of subsequent ones depend on its characteristics, parameters, behavior and evaluation metrics measures and actions for successful management impacts on the behavior of the project team and its results. Here the focus is on the participants in the project team - the project leader/project manager and the project members. The system of criteria and requirements to which the participants in the specific project teams should meet has been examined.

In this part of the dissertation, the author offers an interesting classification of team members, developed based on his personal experience. The construction of similar profiles of the team participants facilitates the work of the project manager, including in his selection of individual, specific methods of managerial influence. Examining the different management styles of project teams, doctoral student Vranchev rightly notes that "the management style depends on the specifics of the project, on structure, complexity, scale, culture, organization, situation, conditions, etc. There is no way to use the methods of only one leadership style. They flow into (prelivat) the leadership and management process."

In this chapter, the author proposes two models for improving the management of project teams. The first model is presented descriptively, quite exhaustively, while in the case of the second



model, the approach is considerably more parsimonious and is mainly limited to its figurative presentation. The possibilities (claimed by the doctoral student) that this author's model provides for improving the management of project teams do not become clear.

**The third chapter** has a methodological and practical-applied nature. In it, the author performs the last research task of the dissertation. He examines consistently the purpose and stages of empirical research. The research model developed by him allows the collection of the necessary information and the achievement of the goal of the dissertation work defined in the introduction. In this chapter, doctoral student Vranchev analyzes and evaluates the results of the empirical study. After conducting the research and identifying the specific problem areas (27 items), he formulates recommendations for solving each of the problems and for improving the management of the project teams.

At the end of each of the main parts of the dissertation, Boyan Vranchev makes relevant summaries and conclusions. The conclusion of the dissertation contains the necessary evidence for the achievement of the goal stated in the introduction, for the fulfillment of the set research tasks and for the confirmation of the research thesis. In developing the dissertation, the author followed the rules of scientific ethics. Literary sources are cited correctly.

#### IV. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The dissertation, according to Article 6 (2) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, must contain scientific or applied scientific results that represent an original contribution to science. As noted above, the dissertation of Boyan Vranchev is an original work on an actual and significant for practice problem and contains both scientific and scientifically applied results. The main contributions of the candidate can be expressed in the following:

- √ the theory in the field of project team management is enriched and the possibilities for its improvement are outlined;
- √ different profiles of the participants in the project teams were built;
- √ two original models for managing project teams have been developed, through the application of which a favorable environment is created for the growth of opportunities for improving the management aspects of project activity and teamwork;
- √ a methodology has been developed and tested for analysis and evaluation of the opportunities for improving the management of project teams;
- √ the main problems in the management of project teams were identified and recommendations were made to improve this management.

#### V. Evaluation of dissertation publications

Boyan Vranchev has also presented a list of scientific publications, which includes a total of 5 titles (1 study, 2 articles and 2 reports). One of the publications is co-authored and the rest are independent. Three of them are directly related to the topic of the dissertation. The publications are completely sufficient in terms of quantity and exceed the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

#### VI. Evaluation of the abstract

Along with the dissertation, Boyan Vranchev has submitted, according to the requirements, an abstract. The abstract in its volume (59 pages), form, structure, scope and content was developed according to the usual practice. Synthesized and faithfully reflects the achievements of the dissertation.

#### VII. Critical notes, recommendations and questions

Boyan Vranchev has successfully completed his research task. My assessment of the quality of the dissertation, the achieved scientific and scientific-applied results, is high. I do not find any serious weaknesses, apart from those mentioned above in the exposition.

#### Questions:

1. What problems can arise when managing project teams whose members are based in different geographical and time zones?
2. Which of the leadership styles proposed by Tannenbaum & Schmidt (cited in the dissertation) does the author perceive as closest to his understanding?
3. Which of the proposed profiles of the members of the project team does the author of the dissertation associate most fully with?
4. What is the author's opinion about Carlyle's theory (discussed in the dissertation)?

#### VIII. Conclusion

The dissertation submitted for evaluation on the topic "Possibilities for improving the management of project teams in industrial enterprises" is an original scientific study with results significant for theory and practice. I believe that the volume, structure, actuality, practical significance and scientific value of the dissertation submitted by doctoral student Boyan Vranchev meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Academy of Economics for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

All this gives me sufficient grounds to declare my positive vote for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Boyan Dimitrov Vranchev in professional direction 3.8. Economics, Doctoral Program "Economics and Management (Industry)".

Svishtov,

10.01.2024

Reviewer: .....

(Prof. Dr. L. Varamezov)