

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC
JURY
UNDER PROCEDURE FOR THE
ACQUISITION OF
EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE
"DOCTOR" BY DOCTORAL PROGRAM
"FINANCE, MONEY CIRCULATION,
CREDIT AND INSURANCE (FINANCE) "

Review

The review was prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zhelyo Vatev Vatev, Department of Finance and Credit, Academy of Economics "D.A. Tsenov" - Svishtov, scientific specialty "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance"

Reason for submitting the review: participation in the body of a scientific jury, approved by order № 1010 of 16.11.2021 of the Rector of the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov and decision of the scientific jury from the first meeting held on 18.11.2021.

Author of the dissertation: Orlin Chavdarov Yaprakov, part-time doctoral studies, state-funded education, in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field: 3.8. Economics, doctoral program: "Finance, money circulation, credit and insurance (Finance)"

Academic unit where the doctoral student is enrolled: Department of Finance and Credit, Academy of Economics D. A. Tsenov "- Svishtov

Topic of the dissertation: "Restructuring, consolidation and competition in the Bulgarian banking market"

Academic supervisor: Prof. Dr. Stoyan Prodanov, Department of Finance and Credit, Academy of Economics "D.A. Tsenov" – Svishtov

This review has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the existing Law for the development of the academic staff, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in SA "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov.

1. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation of doctoral student Orlin Yaprakov is a serious theoretical and applied research with a total volume of 210 pages. It can be assumed that this volume is completely sufficient to achieve the goals and objectives set by the author. The research paper consists of an introduction (4 pages), main text (three chapters - 153 pages), conclusion (8 pages), list of used and cited literature sources and appendices. The three chapters are well balanced and are logically interconnected. Each chapter consists of 3 main paragraphs. The introductory and concluding parts are presented in accordance with the generally accepted requirements. The main text includes 28 tables and 28 figures.

The dissertation has clearly defined object, subject, goals and tasks of the research, as well as a formulated dissertation thesis. The object of the research paper is the Bulgarian banking market. The subject of the study focuses on the problems of restructuring, consolidation and competition in the Bulgarian banking market in the light of increasing regulatory requirements. The aim of the dissertation is through research of theoretical aspects and analysis of the practical realm, to identify the main driving trends and clues for the Bulgarian banking market in support of confirming the relationship between restructuring and consolidation in order to achieve compliance with evolving regulatory requirements in an environment of intensified interbank competition. The defended dissertation thesis is that the Bulgarian banking market is developing in conditions of interbank competition, requiring institutional restructuring and consolidation in order to comply with the evolving regulatory framework and supervisory mechanisms of the Central bank, prudential measures and targeted indicators of capital, risk, profitability and return. The chosen research methodology corresponds to the set goals and objectives.

The doctoral student is well acquainted with the state and degree of illustration of the problem in the specialized economic literature, as well as with the practical achievements in the field studied by him. He draws on a rich and varied set of literary sources. A bibliography is attached to the dissertation, including a total of 130 titles, of which 51 in Cyrillic and 79 in Latin. Literary sources are used in good faith and are quoted correctly, according to the rules of scientific ethics.

The main text of the dissertation has been successfully supplemented with 9 detailed appendices with a total volume of 26 pages. The author demonstrates opportunities to systematize and critically analyze the existing scientific views or practical

problems and on this basis to defend his position. This gives me reason to believe that he can successfully conduct independent research.

The dissertation was discussed in its entirety at a meeting of the Department of Finance and Credit at the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov"- Svishtov. In the peer-reviewed version, it is noteworthy that the author has reflected most of the comments and recommendations made during the discussion of the dissertation.

2. ASSESSMENT OF THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The research paper is dedicated to a real, significant and current economic problem. It presupposes scientific research from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. The reviewed topic has many aspects. It requires the layout of a wide range of questions related to diverse aspects of banking. It should be noted that in recent years there has been a growing dynamics of the processes taking place in the banking sector of Bulgaria, accompanied by some negative trends and difficulties. One of the tools for solving the existing problems is the restructuring and consolidation of the banking sector. This determines the relevance and importance of the topic of the study. The dissertation is structurally solid and has the necessary logical consistency while reviewing the relevant issues. It is well-organized, and the exposition demonstrates a very good transition from common to distinct characteristics. In the beginning, some theoretical formulations are presented and an overview of the concepts in the field of bank consolidation, restructuring and competition is made (Chapter One). On this basis, various guidelines are proposed for analysis of the Bulgarian banking market in the conditions of interbank competition (Chapter Two). The dissertation ends with an empirical study of the ecosystem and the processes of consolidation and restructuring of banks in Bulgaria (Chapter Three). In the end of each chapter, appropriate summaries are made in the form of main conclusions. It becomes clear that in structural terms a combination of theoretical and applied, methodological and empirical aspects of the issue is utilized. In addition, there is a full correspondence between the topic and the content of the study. The doctoral student's aspiration, where possible or necessary, to reinforce the debatable nature of the research paper leaves a pleasant impression. Opinions and views of individual authors or different schools are presented on certain issues. At the same time, this is not done aimlessly, and on many of these issues the student justifies his own

position. Thus, the author conveys a more pronounced research character of his work.

The research is characterized by the relevance of the figures, graphs and tables used. In this way, a clear and efficient representation of the analyzed information is achieved, as a prerequisite for objective and reliable conclusions.

The prepared abstract has a volume of 32 pages. It reflects in a synthesized form the content, the main results and conclusions achieved in the research process. It encompasses all the necessary elements for compiling an abstract for a dissertation, including substantiation of the relevance of the topic, outlining the object, subject, purpose, tasks, research thesis and research methodology, presentation of the structure and content of the work, as well as guidelines for future research on the dissertation topic, reference for contributions, reference for compliance with national requirements, list of the doctoral student's publications, declaration of originality of the dissertation.

All publications of the author, reflected in the abstract (5 in total), are on the topic of the dissertation. The doctoral student has published three articles and two scientific reports, which covers the national requirements for a minimum number of points according to the regulations for the application of the law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. These publications represent parts of the dissertation and reflect some of the positive aspects of the nature of contributions. In this way, it becomes known to those interested in the discussed issues- representative of the financial theory and practice. This is further supported by the author's participation in various scientific forums (3 in number) on issues related to the topic of the dissertation.

The work of the academic supervisor Prof. Dr. Stoyan Prodanov with the doctoral student can be assessed as fruitful, contributing to the transformation of the dissertation into a completed scientific work.

3. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE DISSERTATION

The presented dissertation is an independent and completed research on a specific topic. The author demonstrates his ability to research, systematize, build upon, formulate problems and seek approaches to solving them.

A number of positive features stand out in the study, the most significant of which are the following:

- The systematization, comparative analysis and critical evaluation of the results of the research of leading authors in the field of restructuring, consolidation and competition in the banking sector can be positively evaluated.
- The author's interpretation of the key concepts, on which the dissertation focuses: restructuring, consolidation and competition in the banking sector is presented.
- The dependence between the consolidation, competition and restructuring of banks with the macroeconomic, regulatory and institutional framework of the state is justified.
- The illustration of a number of specific analytical indicators for the state of the banking market and the processes that take place within it deserves a positive appraisal.
- The doctoral student's desire to construct his work based on the research of a wide database of up-to-date data cannot be ignored. Thus, the dissertation has developed a stronger practical-applied direction. In this way, the author's own contribution to the collection, processing and analysis of this significant empirical database should be accentuated.
- Through the processing of abundant empirical material, the effects of the restructuring and consolidation of commercial banks in Bulgaria are studied based on the application of the CAMEL approach.

Overall, the scientific merits of the peer-reviewed work are aimed at transferring the experience and achievements of developed countries in the researched field and enriching knowledge on this issue in our country.

4. REMARKS AND QUESTIONS ON THE DISSERTATION

I have no significant critical remarks towards the piece of research. In regards to the defense of the dissertation, I would like to ask the doctoral student the following specific question: if the consolidation process is observed not from the positions of the banks, but from the point of view of the banks' clients and other related stakeholders, what are the benefits and negatives for them derived from the consolidation of bank capital?

Considering the importance and wide scope of the researched issues, I would like to recommend to the author to continue his study on the problems of restructuring, consolidation and competition of the banking sector and to expand his research in this field.

4. CONCLUSION

The dissertation is a completed scientific work and can be considered as successful. The student meets the requirements for being awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" according to the Law on the Development of Academic Staff and the Regulations for its implementation. I believe that he has the necessary qualities to obtain this educational and scientific degree.

Based on this, I express a positive statement on the dissertation on "Restructuring, consolidation and competition in the Bulgarian banking market" and propose to the honored members of the scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (of Economics) to the PhD student Orlin Chavdarov Yaprakov specialisation "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance (Finance)".

22.11.2021

Reviewer:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zhelyo Vatev)