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D. A. TSENOV ACADEMY OF ECONOMICS – SVISHTOV

REVIEW

for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD)
in professional field 3.8. Economics,
doctoral programme "Planning"
under a procedure announced by D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

This review has been prepared in accordance with the model structure for the form and content of a review written by a member of a scientific jury for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) under a procedure announced by D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

Reviewer: Prof. Atanas Blazhev Atanasov, PhD, whose scientific specialty is "Accounting, Control and Analysis of Economic Activity", a member of the Department of Accounting at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov and a member of the scientific jury pursuant to Order No. 789/31 August 2026 of the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, in accordance with Article 70 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Management and Marketing (Minutes No. 1/28 August 2026), and the decision taken at the scientific jury meeting of 10 September 2026 (Minutes No. 1/10 September 2026).

Author of the dissertation: Miroslav Georgiev Marinov, full-time doctoral student at the Department of Strategic Planning, D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, doctoral student No. d010323309.

Dissertation title: *"Developing Human Resource Development Strategies in Business Organisations in the Chemical Industry"*

Academic supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Mihail Simeonov Chipriyanov, PhD

I. General overview of the dissertation:

The aim of the dissertation is to examine the current state of strategic human resource planning in business organisations in the chemical industry in Bulgaria. It seeks to identify the challenges facing these enterprises and, on this basis, to develop and test a new model for anticipatory and strategically flexible management using data processing and artificial intelligence (AI).

The object of the dissertation research is business organisations in the pulp and paper industry in Bulgaria (Division 17 – Manufacture of paper, paperboard and products thereof under NACE 2025, code 17.11 – Manufacture of pulp and code 17.12 – Manufacture of paper and paperboard).

The subject of the research comprises the processes, methods and interrelationships involved in developing long-term strategic plans for human resource development in the industrial sector.

The principal research thesis is that introducing an innovative approach to strategic human resource management in business organisations in Bulgaria's chemical industry has considerable potential to improve staffing for internal activities and business processes and, consequently, the strategic competitiveness of organisations as a whole.

The dissertation is 160 pages long and consists of: a title page; a table of contents (2 pages); a list of figures and tables (2 pages); a list of abbreviations and acronyms (1 page); an introduction (4 pages); the main text (three chapters, 122 pages); a conclusion (3 pages); and a list of references (including 11 sources in Cyrillic and 103 in Latin script, 12 pages). The dissertation also contains four appendices (13 pages).

The introduction highlights the relevance, aim, objectives, object and subject of the research and formulates the research thesis. It outlines the research methodology, the scope of the empirical studies and the limitations encountered during the research.

Chapter One examines strategic planning and models of human resource development. In this context, it explores the specific features of the main human resource development models and the fundamental relationship "conceptualisation – strategising – planning" in human resource management. It analyses the importance of strategic approaches to human resource development and the integration of activities aimed at developing human resource management strategies. Emphasis is placed on trends and challenges in human resource management in companies manufacturing pulp, paper and paperboard.

Chapter Two presents an empirical study of strategic human resource planning and development in enterprises manufacturing pulp, paper and paperboard. It sets out the research aims and objectives, working hypotheses, empirical

research methodology and sample characteristics. The data are analysed, and the results and statistical assessments are presented. On this basis, the author's conclusions are substantiated and formulated.

Chapter Three examines methodological aspects of developing human resource development strategies in business organisations in the chemical industry. This part of the dissertation focuses on innovative methods for assessing human resource potential, integrating data mining technologies into strategic human resource management, and applying artificial intelligence to human resource planning. An original model for flexible human resource management is developed and tested. In this context, conclusions and recommendations for improvement in business organisations in the chemical industry are presented.

The conclusion summarises the results achieved through the research.

The main text includes 11 figures and 18 tables.

II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation:

The submitted dissertation is characterised by a clearly defined object, subject, aim and objectives, as well as a well-formulated and convincingly defended research thesis. This provides grounds for regarding it not only as a completed and relevant study, but also as a timely and necessary attempt to respond adequately to current theoretical and practical needs concerning the development of human resource development strategies in business organisations in the chemical industry.

The research methodology has been applied correctly: problems are identified and ways of resolving them are proposed, while relevant analyses, generalisations, conclusions and recommendations are provided. The author's ideas and positions are clearly articulated throughout the text.

The research makes justified use of appropriate scientific methods and tools, together with well-prepared illustrative material in the form of figures and tables.

In structural, technical and stylistic terms, the work is of a very high standard. Its individual parts are logically interconnected, and its overall length is appropriate. This enables the research thesis to be substantiated and defended from both theoretical and applied perspectives.

Literature sources and applicable regulatory documents have been used conscientiously throughout the research. This is also confirmed by the author's declaration of originality of the dissertation, attached to the dissertation abstract.

The lists of publications on the dissertation topic (four publications) and participation in scientific forums (two participations), personally signed by the

doctoral student and included in the procedure documents, demonstrate that the main aspects of the research have been communicated to a specialised audience. The dissertation abstract is 42 pages long. It reflects the dissertation's content objectively, clearly, accurately and comprehensively and faithfully presents its strengths. Its structure follows the logical progression of the research.

III. Scientific and applied scientific contributions of the dissertation:

The following scientific and applied scientific contributions can be identified in the dissertation:

- Based on a critical analysis, the challenges facing strategic human resource management in business organisations manufacturing pulp, paper and paperboard have been systematised and identified. A conceptual framework for the transition from reactive to flexible strategic planning has been theoretically substantiated, taking account of three drivers of change: digital transformation, demographic imbalances and the requirements of the Green Deal.
- A comprehensive empirical study using interviews was conducted in pulp, paper and paperboard manufacturing enterprises in Bulgaria, providing statistical confirmation of the dissertation's scientific hypotheses. Shortcomings in personnel management were identified, including "planning rigidity", the gap between technological capabilities and HR planning, the lack of integration between ERP and HRIS systems, and specific external barriers to workforce provision. The need for a new professional profile in the industry, based on the "Triad of the Future", was substantiated.
- The author developed the HIRA human resource management model, which integrates data from manufacturing execution systems (MES) with HR environments. The model incorporates a comparative audit procedure linking employee appraisal data with production indicators, as well as predictive indicators of personnel rotation based on cognitive workload and technical flexibility. Through prospective testing in enterprises manufacturing pulp, paper and paperboard, the operational and economic feasibility of the model has been demonstrated, and guidelines for its implementation have been defined.

IV. Critical comments, questions and recommendations concerning the dissertation:

The following comments and recommendations may be made regarding the dissertation; they do not diminish its undoubtedly positive qualities:

- Despite the author's evident efforts, certain parts of the text still tend to be more descriptive than analytical and research-oriented;

• In a constructive spirit, I would recommend that the doctoral student continue and expand his research into this interesting and debatable subject.

I would like to raise the following question regarding the dissertation:

• What principal opportunities does the doctoral student envisage in the short term for optimising human resource development strategies in business organisations in Bulgaria's chemical industry?

V. Overall conclusion and opinion:

In conclusion, the dissertation "Developing Human Resource Development Strategies in Business Organisations in the Chemical Industry" contains scientific and applied scientific results that constitute an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the relevant Regulations of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

The dissertation demonstrates that doctoral student Miroslav Georgiev Marinov possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the doctoral programme "Planning" and has the ability and capacity to conduct independent scientific research.

All of the above gives me grounds to express my positive opinion and to recommend that the distinguished scientific jury vote in favour of awarding Miroslav Georgiev Marinov the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) in professional field 3.8. Economics, doctoral programme "Planning".

19 October 2026

Reviewer:
(Prof. At. Atanasov, PhD)