

Scientific review

of the dissertation

THE ROLE OF DUAL TRAINING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT POLICIES IN THE ORGANIZATION

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Research supervisor – Assoc. Prof. Olimpia Vedar PhD

Reviewer: Professor Tsvetan Davidkov (Dr.Sc.)

The review is prepared on the basis of Order № RD 38-614 /28-10-2024 of the Rector of Sofia University for approval of the scientific jury and the decision of the scientific jury for the distribution of roles - Protocol № 1 / 31-10-2024.

The peer-reviewed text is a dissertation for the award of PhD in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Economic Management).

The author - Mrs. Silvia Toneva - is a full-time PhD student at the Department of Business Administration during the period 2021 - 2024. She has successfully completed all requirements of the doctoral program. The check of the text in the anti-plagiarism system clearly shows that the author has worked correctly with the information sources (basis: protocol for checking the originality of the dissertation work; opinion regarding the procedure for preventing plagiarism - signed by the scientific supervisor).

Mrs. Silvia Toneva is a graduate of UNWE with two master degrees: master's in Human resource management; master's degree in economics (with specializations in psychology and pedagogy). She has solid professional experience in different organizations - she has performed various functions in the field of HR - recruitment and selection of personnel; training and development; project management in the same field. Since 2018, she has been the chief expert at National agency for VET. Her work in this agency gives her the opportunity to fully and systematically know the field of vocational education. This is one of the reasons why in her dissertation she researches the possibilities of dual education (DVET) for the implementation of HRM policies.

I will develop the thesis that the evaluated work is an in-depth study, based on which useful results have been obtained - both for the interested parties - the object of the study (educational institutions - employers - educational management institutions, etc.), and also for Mrs. Silvia Toneva and her supervisor - Assoc. Prof. Olimpia Vedar PhD.

Brief presentation of the dissertation work. The text is 233 pages long. It is structured as follows: Contents (p. 2-3); Abbreviations used + list of tables and figures (4-6); Introduction (7-15); Chapter One: Dual Training. Opportunities to solve current problems in human resources management (16-122); Second chapter: Presentation and analysis of the results of the conducted research (123-185); Conclusion (183-185); Contributions (186); Sources (187-206); Appendices (207-233). The structure thus described is suitable for the deployment of the dissertation research.

The following language keys give a meaningful idea of the individual structural parts:

- **Introduction:** dual training system (DVET) – essence & benefits; opportunities to solve current problems of education and labor policy through DVET; object / subject of the dissertation study - research thesis; aims and objectives of the research; stages; limitations.

- **First chapter:** (1) basic definitions in the system of vocational training and education; (2) theoretical orientations of practice-based training (learning models); (3) normative regulation and state policy in the researched area; (4) previous experience in the Bulgarian education system; (5, 6) DVET in a European context and outside the EU; (7) the functional area of HRM; (8) HR needs planning policy, job analysis and design; (9) recruitment and selection policy; (10) orientation and adaptation policy for newly hired employees; (11) remuneration and benefits policy; (12) training and career development policy; (13) performance appraisal policy.

- **Second chapter:** (1) methodological framework of the study; (2) goals and results of a preliminary study; (3) empirical research among employers participating as partners in the dual training system; (4) conclusions from conducted focus groups; (5) opportunities to strengthen the link between HRM and DVET policies through improved efficiency of the dual system.

The thus presented structure and substantive accents provide an opportunity for a full development of the dissertation research.

Evaluation of the dissertation work.

My overall assessment of the dissertation work is positive. Main arguments:

- The scope of the dissertation research is current - the introduction of DVET into practice in Bulgaria is a controversial process, accompanied by both certain advantages and numerous problems (now they are called challenges). The choice of the topic makes it possible to reveal and analyze a complex system of

social relationships and the actors related to them - they participate (and depend on them) both the state and prospects for the development of the DVET, as well as the capabilities of this system to solve key issues of the labor market.

- Due to her education and her professional activity, the author knows very well the studied phenomena and the relationship between them. There is a good combination of knowing (almost exhaustively) the theoretical sources, the conducted empirical studies, and the institutional activity (MLSP, MES, NAVET, etc.).

- In connection with the above, the author uses a rich corpus of information sources (94 books and articles on paper - in Bulgarian, Russian and English; 142 Internet sources). The sources are described correctly. They are essentially used.

- In the dissertation there are *clear guiding principles* - object and subject of the study; goals - tasks - thesis, etc. The defended (and defended) thesis is as follows: through the dual training system, part of the challenges related to the management of human resources in the organization can be solved...” (Dissertation, p. 13) Following the logic of the dissertation and the results obtained, it can be concluded that the requested tasks have been completed; stated objectives have been achieved; the thesis is proved.

- The set of used channels and tools for gathering and processing data are adequate to the set goals and tasks. Data were collected through two field studies (pre- and main) and focus groups (two). Both quantitative measurements (based on questionnaire data collection) and qualitative formats (focus groups) are available in the set of methods. Overall, the data collected is of good quality.

- In close connection with the conclusions of the analysis, the author offers tools (see Appendice № 6) on the basis of which the efficiency of the DVET system and its contribution to solving specific HRM problems can be improved.

- Mrs. Silvia Toneva shows good research skills and ability to: research sources; to formulate and prove these etc.

Evaluation of contributions. The contribution claim can be defended – there are both theoretical and methodological and applied contributions. Among the contributions, the following should be highlighted: a) an innovative approach, in which DVET is seen as an opportunity to effectively solve challenges and problems facing HRM; b) new knowledge - a systematic and accurate picture of the state of dual training in Bulgaria and its relationship (or lack thereof) with HRM policies is presented; c) the workability of the research program as a basis for the development of research strategies and tools has been verified; d) there are well-founded proposals to the interested parties for maximizing the possible

and desired effects of DVET in HRM (including innovative practices - models, mechanisms and tools - for linking the systems of DVET and HRM).

Critical notes. Recommendations.

During previous discussions of parts of the dissertation work (or the whole work), I had the opportunity to formulate critical remarks and recommendations. In the course of improving and developing the text, Mrs. S. Toneva reflected a significant part of them. Therefore, I do not find it necessary to mention them again here.

Given the future work of S. Toneva, I recommend that she develop the ability to conceptualize (this is the antithesis of "obsessing" in details for the sake of details); to problematize (find problems where others see solutions). Because the critical pathos of a text is an indicator of its level.

Within the framework of review stylistics, I note that critical remarks and recommendations do not change my high evaluation of the dissertation work; they should be considered as possible orientations in the further scientific and professional activity of the PhD student.

Abstract.

Overall, the abstract gives a good idea of the overall text. It probably makes sense to list the sources used before the contributions and publications list.

Publications.

The presented list of publications related to the topic of the dissertation study includes four titles (S. Toneva is the sole author of two of the texts; two publications are co-authored). They were published in the period 2022-2024. Each of the headings is related to the topic of the dissertation research. The publications present essential results of the dissertation work. They are published in appropriate journals. In this sense, I conclude that the publications satisfy the requirement for publication activity.

Personal impressions.

I have known Mrs. Silvia Toneva for more than 5 years. Our professional paths "crossed" in connection with the preparation and validation of state educational standards in the field of vocational training. I follow her work closely during her doctoral studies as well. My impressions are unequivocally positive. She is purposeful, organized, able to work. Responsible. Sympathetic to the work of the department. Able to conduct productive professional dialogue. She understands criticism. I have always enjoyed communicating with her.

Conclusions. Given the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Ms. Silvia Toneva has fully fulfilled the requirements of the PhD program in the scientific direction 3.7 Administration and Management (Business Management).

- During the PhD programme Ms Silvia Toneva developed valuable research and other professional skills - a reason to conclude that she is able to independently conduct research at high quality standards.

- The submitted dissertation meets all the requirements to be awarded the PhD in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Economic Management).

I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to support the awarding of the scientific degree PhD in professional field 3.7 Administration and management (Economic management) to Mrs. Silvia Toneva. I will support such a decision.

Sofia, November 15, 2024

Reviewer:

Professor Tsvetan Davidkov (Dr.Sc.)