

REVIEW

By: Prof. PhD Aleksandar Ivanov Marinov,
Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, Department of Public Administration,
member of scientific jury, appointed by the Rector of SU „St. Kliment
Ohridski”, Order № ПД 38/291 - 17.07.2020

Regarding: PhD procedure in Professional Field 3.3. Political Science
(Public Administration)

PhD Thesis

*The quality of public administration in relation to the leadership efficiency:
impact on satisfaction and efficiency of Human Resources*

By: **Ilias Konstantinidis**

1. General outline of the procedure

The PhD thesis „*The quality of public administration in relation to the leadership efficiency: impact on satisfaction and efficiency of Human Resources*”, supervised by prof. DSc Todor Tanev was discussed and promoted to public defense by the council of Public Administration Department on June, 22, 2020.

The dissertation consists of 203 standard pages (along with the list of abbreviations, bibliography, and appendices). Structurally, it includes an introduction, an exposition in six chapters, and conclusions (applications of the dissertation and proposals are included). The literature used is a total of 314

sources. In support of the analysis, 12 tables, and 20 figures are given. The scientific sources are up to date, relevant, of wide conceptual variety and fully applied.

The PhD thesis is in line with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), and the regulations of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”.

2. General characteristic of the PhD thesis’ subject matter and methodology

The PhD thesis subject matter and purpose are definitely relevant, because Human resource management in public sector, including healthcare services is absolutely essential, since the operation of the system depends on the competence, quality and rational allocation of the healthcare staff.

According to the above, it is the duty of any leader to ensure that the relevant conditions exist that can lead to a continuous improvement of procedures. Such conditions can be created by incorporating a suitable strategy of planning, implementation, systematic control, process redesign and simplification that will turn them into the driving force for the success of the public organization.

The PhD thesis *research’s aim*, defined by the author, is to explore the relationships between management and organizational procedures' operation with employees' and patients' satisfaction. The *research thesis* is that “when effective management and innovative organizational procedures are aligned with a public organization's strategy, these affect the employees’ perceptions of the organization and have a positive impact on customer satisfaction”.

The chosen structure of the PhD thesis matches the good standards for systematic research, validating basic theoretical constructs in a wide and very fluid field – leadership studies and namely – the interrelations of leadership and

human resources management in public organizations. A comprehensive outline of the research tasks and methods is offered. The author applies a large list of information sources, including his own empirical research, aiming to examine whether the organization (a public hospital) is taking action in order to improve management and organizational procedures in a continuous course for sustainable development. This research investigates the perceptions of the heads of departments as well as the rest staff's and customers' satisfaction, so that management collect the necessary data in order to fix the problematic areas and foster a culture of accountability and continuous learning with regard to the provision of healthcare services.

Very important part of the thesis' pragmatic orientation is the purpose to contribute to the continuous improvement of management actions and policies by the leader, and also provide a system of continuous feedback and revision of organizational procedures under a quality cycle process.

The summary of the PhD thesis is in line with the requirements and contains the main methodological points and research steps, thus giving a full picture of the scientific achievements of the author. The self-assessment of the dissertation contributions is precise and in some sense modest.

3. General evaluation of the PhD thesis

The general evaluation of the PhD thesis leads to a conclusion about the author's good capacity to solve complex research tasks. Using several well known theoretical frameworks, Ilias Konstantinidis applies them in a specific context, showing understanding and creativity.

I would like to outline at least four clearly manifested strengths of the dissertation.

First, the research problem choice. The obvious relevance is defined by the premise that public hospitals are organizations offering a public good - that

of health, which holds a primary position on the scale of human values-needs. The effectiveness and efficiency of any healthcare system depend – in large degree - on effective leadership which involves continuous improvement of organizational procedures in order to meet the needs of the workforce, the patients, and of the whole society for proper healthcare services.

Second, the formulation and the verification of the research hypotheses. In fact we are facing a complex network of research hypotheses, which verification includes four levels and four distinct studies. The first study confirms that the identification, design and management of innovative organizational procedures, which involves all stakeholders, has a greater impact on satisfaction than others. The second study reveals that patients were extremely satisfied, on the contrary to the nursing staff's satisfaction and the heads of departments' perceptions about the procedures and management actions, which are recorded in low to medium level. The third study examines the effect of the organizational procedures and management actions (in five groups), on each satisfaction parameter. The fourth study reveals that each group affects significantly specific satisfaction parameters. This information could be valuable for leadership in order to proceed to the next step of strategy, i.e. planning.

Third, the elaborating of a comprehensive, context sensitive conceptual framework. It combines different and sometimes even contradicting aspects of leadership studies evolution, namely about the role of leadership in the process of organizational learning in public (healthcare) sector.

Four, the pragmatic perspective of the research. The findings of the dissertation could significantly help hospital leaders. In this way, the organizational - administrative and financial - management function could be improved and the efficiency and effectiveness of the hospital, the satisfaction of the employees and the patients as well as the quality the provided services will be positively affected.

4. Scientific and applied contributions

The scientific contributions of the PhD thesis lay entirely in the declared subject matter of the study and are clearly oriented toward the conceptual and pragmatic development of human resources management in healthcare organizations as an important feature of the public sector.

Contributions could be structured in *four main dimensions*:

First. Elaboration and successful application of an approach of parallel study of the main stakeholders' perceptions and satisfaction in order to find the problematic areas that need improvement actions and highlight the best management practices implemented, as well as to depict a reliable and impartial image of the public organization. Hence, the development and control of the structural model that supports the positive impact of management actions' measurement as well as employees' surveys implementation for the promotion of an organizational culture of change and innovation.

Second. The development and application of a structural model that supports the positive impact of measuring management actions and implementing employee surveys on the promotion of an organizational culture of change and innovation.

Third. Despite the fact that the empirical research was limited to the specific field of the nursing care provided in public hospitals and to a specific geographical area, the approach offers possibilities for its implementation in other fields of public healthcare, in other public institutions, and also in other geographical parts of the country.

Four. It is suggested that the structural model of the first and third study should be expanded and enriched with other variables with regard to indicators for improving organizational procedures. In the case of public hospitals, it

would be interesting to obtain an assessment of the nursing services by other relevant stakeholders except for the patients.

The four dimensions of author's contributions lead to the conclusion that the PhD thesis offers several scientific and applied results contributing to the development of the field of Public Administration. Thus the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) are met.

5. Publications

Ilias Konstantinidis reports four scientific publications related to the dissertation, proving the systematic nature of the research activities. The PhD text and the corresponding publications are with no doubt personal work of the candidate.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

My overall positive impression of the PhD thesis rises no doubts. I have some specific questions and recommendations which could help the future scientific efforts of Ilias Konstantinidis.

Here I would like to mention at least two.

First. To elaborate a more precise distinction between the routine and the strategic leadership functions in Human resources management. Although outlined in the conceptual framework, such kind of empirical conclusions could be useful too.

Second. It seems to me important to elaborate further the idea of the leadership in improving the relationships of multiple stakeholders in healthcare organizations.

7. CONCLUSION

The content and the contributions of the PhD thesis are entirely in line with the requirements of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) and other corresponding regulations. The qualification of the candidate is solid and well proven. These results give me compelling reasons to propose to the honorable scientific jury **to vote unanimously for the awarding of the PhD degree in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Public Administration) to Ilias Konstantinidis.**

26.08.2020 г.

Reviewer:

prof. PhD Aleksandar Marinov