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FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
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Review

from Assoc. Prof. Angelina Miroslavova Markovska, Ph.D.
Veliko Turnovo University "ST. st. CYRIL AND METHODIUS"
of the Dissertation of

Emmanouil Bempekidis

Public Health, National Health System in Greece during the Economic Crisis and Satisfaction of Citizens from the Services Provided

Submitted for obtaining the Doctorate degree (PhD)
Code 3.3 "Political Sciences", specialty "Public Administration"

1. Information about the procedure, the dissertation, avtoreferat and the publications:

From the submitted documents and materials it can be stated that no violations of the procedure for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" have been committed. In general, the dissertation meets the requirements of Art. 6, para. 3 of the Law on the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Ph.D. student has researched a thoroughly broad set of available sources and literature related to her chosen topic. Proof of her profound theoretical knowledge in the field of public administration's management and its better orientation in the available analytical literature are correctly cited in 236 theoretical studies, monographs, books, studies, articles and internet sources mainly in English language. The theoretical problems and the ones covered in the thesis are correctly presented. Avtoreferat of the dissertation correctly reflects the subject and the object, purpose and objectives, structure, and obtained main results of the thesis. The dissertation has realized 3 scientific publications on the topic of its research, two of which have been published in

a collection of participation in an international scientific conference, and 1 in a scientific journal.

2. Relevance and significance of the research problem

The dissertation of Emmanouil Bempekidis presented to the attention of the distinguished jury features the relevance of the researched problem and its significance in times of social and economic inequalities, and their interpretation based on socioeconomic factors that affect health status and the supply and demand of care. The present study attempts to examine whether Greek patients are satisfied with the Greek healthcare system, according to their personal experience, as a sensitive factor and indicator for various deficits in society itself.

The relevance of the topic is strengthened by the main hypothesis of the dissertation, that effective governance and organizational justice increase patient satisfaction and are a key indicator of the quality of the health care system as a complex measure of both medical outcomes, but also of the human dimension of care, general illness and continuous improvement of the environment.

In my opinion, the significance of the research problem is determined by political and economic challenge for all administrations, regardless of whether the healthcare system is subject to public or private funding to provide health services through an organized Healthcare System in order to maximize the level of health at the individual and collective level.

The detailed outlined problem areas of the study are a kind of snapshot not only of the current the socio-economic and political situation in the Greek state and in particular in the Hellenic Healthcare system, but I would say it is largely an analogy of the Bulgarian reality, which gives the results high added value in terms of their feasibility on a supranational scale.

3. General information for the dissertation

The dissertation consists of 211 standard pages (along with tables in the third chapter and bibliography). Structurally, it consists of an introduction, an exposition in three chapters, and conclusions. The literature used is a total of 236 sources. In support of the analysis, tables, and figures are given.

The topic of the research is correctly and precisely formulated, as each of its components finds a subsequent expansion in the general composition of the text. Mr. Bempekidis uses a strong interdisciplinary approach, including methodological tools used in various scientific fields, such as sociology, public administration, and management, economics, political science, psychology, etc.

The subject of his research is the management of the health system in Greece, as an element of the policies implemented by the government, regarding the satisfaction of Greek citizens with the services provided.

The subject of observation is the Greek healthcare system and specifically the Greek hospitals, in order to identify the problems it faces, whether it satisfies patients and in general what can and should be changed, so that all Greek citizens enjoy equal rights and access to health services.

The structure of the dissertation follows the logic of the research, consisting conditionally of two classical parts: theoretical-research (covering 1-2 chapters) and empirical part (chapter 3). The critical in-depth review of the existing literature on the topic has been done, which I consider as an extremely contribution asset of the dissertation.

For the purposes of theoretical research, a quantitative research sample of the hospitalized patients was conducted, in order to investigate their' point of view and to measure their satisfaction.

The theoretical analysis is achieved within the framework of public administration theory, and especially leadership theory. In this context, the literature on the management of health systems has been revised and enriched.

The introduction outlines the problem areas of the research, as justified and the motive that provoked the research interest. The parameters within the author will operate and develop his thesis are set, including the main hypothesis, the object and subject of the study, the methodology used, and the limitations of the study.

The first chapter is entitled "Towards understanding health systems models". Within eight subparagraphs, Mr. Bempekidis logically follow the research framework outlined in the introduction. He demonstrates a thorough understanding of the theoretical models of good governance and handles confident with various concept and categories such as transparency and accountability in the health sector, the concept of justice in terms of organizational justice, leadership theory and est. Particularly valuable, I consider linking the concept of justice, cultural understanding and traits of individuals, as well as the emphasized cultural-value approach, which is applied in the consideration and analysis of the organizational

behavior culture and its significance for the effective management of the organization.

In search of further parallels between the components of organizational justice and the leadership styles from one hand, and the job satisfaction from another, a detailed review of key theories in the public administration has been made, such as those of Max Weber and etc. with an emphasis on the similarities and differences between the leader and the administrator in comparative terms and with references to political leadership. In addition, Bass's fundamental theories of leadership - namely transformational and transactional leadership - are thoroughly considered in connection with the topic of the dissertation.

Mr. Bempekidis successfully outlines the relationship between administrative justice and leadership in an organization (in the case the healthcare system), as the leadership was considered not as a term to denote the position of the first in the hierarchy, but as the way in which he or she performs this role. The structure, characteristics and mechanisms by which the different health systems - liberal, mixed and national health systems, with their specific models - Bismark model and Beveridge model are critically and comparatively examined as a request for the indicators, according to which the effectiveness of the Hellenic Health System and the levels of citizens' satisfaction with the provided health care are subsequently measured in the empirical second part of the dissertation.

I find it ingenious linking the John Rawls's Theory of Justice to the search for a positive effect of ensuring equal access to healthcare for all, because the effect and significance of this theory finds its most natural application in ensuring equal access to social goods, such as freedom, opportunities, wealth.

The disposition between the understandings of equal access to health care as a public good or individual (inherent) right opens the dissertation to the moral-philosophical and ethical comprehension of the dissertation problem, which I find particularly contributing.

As a contribution, I also find the enrichment of the scientific literature, with the poorly known among the academic community model according to which the Hellenic healthcare system functions. I believe that the generalized knowledge on the topic will also allow the structuring of future working models for the more efficient functioning of the health system at the level of the European Union in a situation of deepening global economic crisis.

The second chapter examines in a detailed way the relationship between quality in health services & patient satisfaction, considering the question of

satisfaction is through the categories of justice. In my opinion, the second part presented the conceptual framework, on which the formulation of the hypotheses that will follow in the research part of the work is based.

The research interest in this chapter is focused on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational justice based on research publications on these issues. One of the conclusions in this chapter refers to the leader in the organizational structure of a health unit and more broadly in hospital care, who has specific and key tasks in the administrative activity for planning and systematization of the group's areas of action. At second place the attention is drawn to distributive justice. Quality benefits for patients, health professionals, and insurance funds are outlined in regard to the central question of dissertation.

In my humble opinion, the second chapter enriches the scientific understanding of the theory of expectations, as a key paradigm for understanding consumer expectations for the quality of health services. The author of the dissertation adds to the determining factors the individual experience of the subjects as users of services. Besides expectations theory, there are other factors that are related and obviously affect the degree of patients' satisfaction with the health care services provided to them. It is generally accepted that factors such as social status, gender, age, ethnicity, etc., play an important role in the evaluation of health services by the patient. As a relevant and creative I find the philosophical understanding of the question of the relationship between quality in health services and patient satisfaction in terms of Aristotle's concept of happiness.

The narrative in the second chapter, as well as in the whole dissertation is largely the result of in-depth theoretical and empirical research, which contributes to the high degree of objectivity and relevance of the author's conclusions.

The third chapter already narrows the research field to the subject of the dissertation itself. The analysis in this chapter is based on the results of a study conducted by team of an Experts with the purpose to measure the total satisfaction rate of patients from the *Health Centers's* services. Here the author of the dissertation demonstrates in-depth knowledge of how to construct empirical research, how to choose and use a proper methodology in order to draw a professional conclusion about the nature of the Greek health system. An applied effect of the research concerns the hospital of Kalamata, which has not been recently studied in terms of patient satisfaction. At the same time, the theoretical part of the dissertation focuses on the theory of John Rawls, which has not been extensively studied in the Greek and Bulgarian literature. In this term, the present

dissertation can be interpreted as a starting point for further studies especially at times of crisis and pandemics.

Chapter three have a strong practical and applied orientation and have a significant contribution character. The design of the research process involves the design of the questionnaire, the determination of the population and sample of the research, the data collection process, and the methods of analysis of the results. I fully accept the chosen research technique and used sociological tools. In its application, the professionalism and good preparation of Mr. Bempekidis is demonstrated.

The dissertation concludes with recommendations for solving the problems in the Public Hospitals as a prerequisite for improvement of the Greek health system. This makes the research contribution extremely suitable for the state and public health officials, as well as for health professionals in order to take action to increase patient satisfaction in Greece by the national health system.

I accept the Mr. Bempekidis's recommendation as particularly valuable in terms of the possibilities for reconstruction of the Bulgarian health model, as well as the purpose and characteristics of the so-called health management as a field for future in-depth research on the topic.

4. Evaluation of the scientific-applied results and contributions of the dissertation

Within the framework of the conducted and summarized research on the topic of the dissertation, I can highlight the following more important and significant contribution:

- 1) A theoretical model for linking together the main concepts for healthcare system with John Rawls' theory of justice and with main categories of leadership theory has been demonstrated. This could be applied not only in Greek, but mostly in other EU countries in order to improve and sustain higher quality of health services;
2. Formulation, proving and proposing a working model for constant quantitative and qualitative measurements of satisfaction's degree of the patients as the most important factors in certifying the quality of provided health services;
- 3) Enriching the scientific literature with the launching the new concepts, such as establishing “*Quality Office*” in all Greek hospitals and etc.

4) Properly and correctly collected, analyzed and summarized quantitative and qualitative data can serve as valuable information and foundation for effective leadership of a new type, oriented towards maximizing patient satisfaction of provided healthcare service, imposition of new cultural and value models of behavior within organizations, as well as follow-up strategic planning for improving the Hellenic healthcare system.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no formal reason to make critical remarks on the peer-reviewed dissertation, because they would be the result of my analysis and opinion on the issues under consideration. However, I will note some of my critical observations, which should rather be accepted as guidelines in terms of refining and enriching the dissertation research:

6. Assessment of the dissertation

The dissertation of Emmanouil Bempekidis "*Public Health, National Health System in Greece during the Economic Crisis and Satisfaction of Citizens from the Services Provided*" contains research contributions of significant scientific, methodological and practical value and fully complies with the requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

I give a positive assessment and recommend to the honorable jury **to award Emmanouil Bempekidis the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Political Science" in a professional field 3.3. Political Sciences (specialty "Public Administration")**

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