

## Opinion

of Associate Professor, Dr. Antony Galabov,  
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on a competition for obtaining the educational and qualification degree "Doctor" (Ph.D.),  
Code 3.3. "Political Sciences", Scientific field 3.7. "Public Administration" of the Department  
of Public Administration, Faculty of Philosophy, of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

for a dissertation on a topic:

**"Organizational Performance and Quality of Public Administration: Evaluation and  
improvement through Human Resource Management Practices",**

presented by Mrs. Oikonomidou E. Maria

under the scientific guidance of Associate Professor Tatyana Tomova, PhD; Referees: Assoc.  
Prof. Elena Kalfova, PhD and Assistant Professor Denitsa Hinkova, PhD

The presented dissertation combines key topics and approaches for the development of research in public administration. It focuses on the role of Human Resources Management (HRM) and the application of its practices in the evaluation of administrative performance and quality. The topicality of the issue is determined by the improvement of the practices used in the management of human resources, as well as by the growing requirements to the administration for increasing the quality of performance in the field of Education.

By structuring the content of the dissertation, the author has shown not only a very good knowledge of theoretical concepts and methods of analysis, but also a strict distinction of different levels of analysis, starting from the theoretical part, passing through international research experience; analysis of administrative reforms in Greece before reaching the level of its own research interest.

The subject of research is the specific in nature administration of the educational process, which has rarely been the subject of research interest. In this sense, the proposed dissertation confirms the need for research and application of basic theoretical approaches and evaluative research in relation to specific public administrations. The research of the perceptions and the level of satisfaction of the employees in the administration of the educational institutions, combined with the practices of human resources management, represents a good research perspective on the research topic.

The author formulates his research goals not only in terms of the level of satisfaction, but also in view of the role of human resource management practices in terms of motivation and willingness of employees to improve their skills and apply new approaches in their work. In addition, by assessing the effectiveness of human resource management practices, the author projects the positive changes that improving the quality of administration bring to school staff, local communities and society at large.

The research area is formulated correctly, covering the administrative staff of the Primary and Secondary Directorates of Education in the Region of Central Macedonia (17 public administrative agencies of education located in 7 Greek cities). The specific structure of this type of deconcentrated administration determines the scope of the surveyed units and allows to draw valid conclusions about the general characteristics of employee satisfaction and motivation.

With hers 304 standard pages, (organized in Introduction, the Exposition in seven chapters and general conclusions); the 283 academic sources used; and also 32 tables, 24 figures and 7 graphs, the dissertation respond of the academic requirements for the preparation and presentation of a dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and qualification degree "doctor". The text shows a good knowledge of basic theoretical approaches, as well as skills in using information from various sources.

The research and publication activity of the candidate also meets the requirements for the preparation and defence of the dissertation. The choice of a specific and at the same time indicative for the application of the practices of human resources management object of research such as the regional and territorial administration in the field of education, speaks of developed research skills and good knowledge of the theoretical framework.

In formulating his research hypotheses, the author seeks a significant correlation between the human resource management practices that have been applied and the level of satisfaction and motivation among employees. Significant research interest is the fourth hypothesis, which combines individual characteristics of the surveyed employees with the established level of satisfaction and willingness to improve the quality of administrative services provided. In particular, what the author defines as: " a focus on the human assets as a competitive advantage of public administration".

Implicitly, the chosen model also contains the understanding of the importance of factors such as age and previous experience of employees, geographical location of the surveyed administrative structures and the need to ensure a higher level of comparability with similar international surveys. In his work with statistical data and research results, the author demonstrates a good level of research discipline, paying attention to the limitations that it imposes on the interpretation of the collected information.

A promising direction for further development of research in this area seems to be building a model for assessing the professional career of employees in this type of specific administration, in terms of the effectiveness of human resource management practices and increasing employee satisfaction and motivation.

Each of these elements outlines both the importance of the dissertation research and the potential for its further development and its transformation into a permanent monitoring model, including a system of indicators that allow the improvement of human resource management practice. The quality of the presented dissertation research, as well as the selected issues, presuppose the need to ask a few additional questions that could outline a possible strategic direction of development.

First of all, having in mind the specifics of the surveyed administrative structures, can we find significant differences in the evaluations of employees and the level of their satisfaction when it comes to their work with the central structures of the state in the field of education, on the one hand, and in their interaction with school administrations and teachers - on the other?

To what extent do the general administrative reforms in Greece affect the requirements for the implementation of the tasks and the assessment of the achievements of the specialized administration in the field of education? With the introduction of mechanisms for evaluation and capacity building in public administration in general, can we say that specific requirements for the administration in the field of education are being developed and established?

And a slightly more general, concluding question. What other component, apart from employee satisfaction and motivation, could be incorporated into a one comprehensive model for improving the quality and performance of administrative functions in the field of education? Can we think of other elements to promote the administrative career of employees as an element of strategic human resource management?

This discussion will become increasingly important with regard to various structures of specialized administration. In this sense, research of the type of the presented dissertation should be evaluated as a contribution to the development of human resources management in the administration. This field of analysis is extremely suitable for international comparative research, both between individual regional structures and within the European Union and internationally. The profound changes in the field of education require more and more attention to be paid to the quality of the organization and administration of public policies in education at all levels.

Given the quality of the presented dissertation research; its relevance; good knowledge of theory and practice, as well as the personal commitment of the author, I strongly suggest that Mrs. Oikonomidou E. Maria to be awarded the educational and qualification degree "Doctor" (PhD) Code 3.3. "Political Sciences", Scientific field 3.7. "Public Administration" of the Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Philosophy, of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.