

## REFERENCE

on the dissertation work by Denitsa Dimitrova Andonova

(Under the scientific supervision of professor Tsvetan Davidkov, Doctor of Sciences)

By Associate professor Olympia Vedar, PhD – member of the scientific jury based on order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

The dissertation work CORPORATE WELLNESS STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING – A FACTOR FOR INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ORGANIZATION of doctoral student Denitsa Andonova is the author's claim for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.7 Administration & Management (Business Administration).

About the doctoral student. Mrs. Denitsa Andonova is a full-time doctoral student at the department of BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION. She has fully completed the program for PhD students in PN 3.7 Administration and Management (Business Administration) - based on this and the presented and discussed dissertation work, she was awarded the right to defend; a public defense procedure has been announced. Denitsa Andonova is a graduate of the Faculty of Economics (Bachelor). He has completed master's degrees in HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (SU, Faculty of Business Administration and Economics); WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY (SU, Faculty of Philosophy); POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY (University of Plovdiv). With multiple specializations (including international) in various related fields. Denitsa Andonova is a book author Denitsa Andonova is the author of books that touch on various aspects of health and opportunities for corporate well-being.

Content and structure of the dissertation work. The dissertation is structured as follows: Introduction (p. 6 – 16); Chapter I CORPORATE WELL-BEING AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY – BASIC CONCEPTS, THEORIES, MODELS (16 – 115); Chapter II MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH (116 – 144); Chapter III RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING. DISCUSSION. RECOMMENDATIONS (144 – 167); Conclusion (167 – 170); Information sources (171 – 196); Appendices (197 – 210). The presented structure is suitable for the full development of the content of the dissertation work.

In Chapter I, based on a valuable review of an extensive corpus of information sources (234), the main conceptual indicators are systematically constructed, as follows: CORPORATE WELLNESS (CW) (part 1/chapter 1); CORPORATE WELLNESS STRATEGIES (CWS) AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING PROGRAMS (EWP) - (part 2/chapter 1); ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY (part 3/chapter 1). Chapter II is dedicated to the dissertation research (theoretical rationale; object and subject; goals and objectives; hypotheses; methods and models; methodology and instrumentation; research ethics; psychometric characteristics of the instrument used; limitations). In general, these main thrusts of the study stand up to criticism. Chapter III presents the main results of the empirical study; the hypotheses are tested and commented on. The conclusion is more like a

short summary. A questionnaire for collecting primary empirical data + a list of abbreviations + a list of figures + a list of tables is presented in an appendix.

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

a) The chosen area for research is relatively new (at least for Bulgaria) and insufficiently studied - with the dissertation text, the author contributes to filling this gap;

b) Denitsa Andonova has studied an impressive volume of information sources - mostly in English; she has familiarized herself with a lot of research on organizational well-being - there is a successful attempt to synthesize and summarize a large amount of information. This provides prerequisites for further research.

c) Insofar as it examines a phenomenon (CW) with insufficiently clear contours, it tries to compare and position it against other similar phenomena - this is useful knowledge both for specialists in organizational well-being (if there are any), and also for specialists in the field of HRM, managers (who make decisions), etc.

d) Although Denitsa Andonova herself is an active consultant in the field of KB, she does not treat the subject of the study as an apologist; seeks to explore theory and practice holistically; to state existing contradictions – to state the arguments behind different points of view. This is an honest research position and useful for highlighting outstanding issues (both theoretically and practically).

e) At the level of the reached level of the general and her own development, the author tries to conceptualize and build the theoretical contours for the study of KB and take a step towards the tools for empirical verification of model(s) and hypotheses. Although this process is difficult and not without problems, the experience deserves a positive evaluation.

f) On the basis of the built and verified model for the basis of the empirical study, hypotheses were verified - the results provide an opportunity to develop the model and strive for results that, to a higher degree, systematically describe and explain important internal connections and regularities of the studied phenomenon.

g) In general, the language used is understandable (of course, stylistic and other linguistic improvements are possible).<sup>1</sup>

Evaluation of theoretical and scientific-applied contributions. The claim for scientific contributions (author's abstract, p. 39) can be defended. Contributions can be attributed to the following types:

a) conceptualization of an insufficiently researched area and construction of an apparatus for empirical verification of raised hypotheses; b) obtaining defensible scientific results that are new for Bulgaria; c) verification of hypotheses that make it possible to study CW in a Bulgarian socio-cultural context.

Critical notes and recommendations. During the preparation of the dissertation, it was repeatedly discussed in the Department of Business Administration - the author was regularly given evaluation and feedback, as well as suggestions for improvements. Given this, I formulate two general claims

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<sup>1</sup> Other argument can be added to those mentioned.

and recommendations, which are not so much in the nature of criticism - rather, they are guidelines for subsequent research:

- The title of the thesis includes "... a factor in increasing the effectiveness of the organization". It is a definite request and forms expectations. In the model, however, efficiency is partially present – through certain effects. The author - of course - makes certain reservations, but to defend her concept, some premises and assumptions should be better stated.
- The model - at the level of conceptual indicators - constitutes independent variables and a dependent variable - POSITIVE EFFECTS (author's abstract, p. 10) This simplification can be accepted with the argument that a "clean" model is sought for the initial research, where more clearly and dependencies can definitely be established. In subsequent steps, mediating and/or moderating factors should probably appear in the model – an attempt to bring the theoretical generalization closer to the complexity of the real picture.
- Although we are introduced to a heavily edited version of the thesis, there are still "wellness" and other foreign words that can be avoided in some places.

The abstract gives an adequate idea of the overall dissertation work. To the extent that there is a different practice, one can argue about whether it is necessary to present the full list of used information sources in the author's reference (the author did it - this has its positive sides as well).

There are eight publications about the dissertation. Two of them are in English. D. Andonova is the sole author of seven of the texts; one publication is co-authored. Most publications are based on participation in scientific forums. Acquaintance with the content of the publications gives reason to claim that they reflect essential results of the author's dissertation efforts. From the point of view of the requirements for doctoral students, Denitsa Andonova's publication activity is high and exceeds these requirements.

Personal impressions. I know Mrs. Denitsa Andonova both as a student (bachelor), during her master's studies, and as a doctoral student. I highly appreciate her way of working; her ability to build and maintain collegial relationships. Professionally, she is purposeful, and active, with a clear vision of what she wants to achieve. On a personal level – mother of two wonderful children; with a nice family.

Conclusion. The above gives me a reason to assume that the doctoral student Denitsa Dimitrova Andonova has fulfilled all the necessary requirements of the LDASRB, the Regulations for the Application of the LDASRB, the Regulations for the Terms and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". Based on this, I support a decision to award the doctoral student the scientific degree DOCTOR in 3.7 Administration and Management (Business Administration).

Sofia, 15th August 2022

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