



STATEMENT

I. General information

Statement written by **Associate Professor Desislava Borislavova Serafimova, Ph.D.**, Department of Management and Administration, Faculty of Management, University of Economics – Varna, Bulgaria, 77 Knyaz Boris Blvd, e-mail: serafimova_d@ue-varna.bg

Regarding: dissertation work for obtaining a scientific-educational degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.7 Administration and management.

Grounds for preparing the statement: participation in a scientific jury for the defense of a dissertation according to the order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" № RD 38-294/16.06.2022.

Author of the dissertation: Irina Petkova Yanchovska, PhD candidate at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski"

Dissertation topic: FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES IN THE ICT SECTOR.

I. General presentation of the dissertation work

1.1. Subject

In the dissertation work, the specific and most important factors influencing the job satisfaction of employees in the ICT sector are derived and investigated. Their importance and power of influence are measured. For this purpose, two research questions, four research tasks and 11 research hypotheses were formulated and presented in a research model constructed by the author.

1.2. Content

The dissertation is 192 pages long, of which 18 pages are appendices. It contains an introduction, two chapters, a discussion and conclusion, bibliographic references and appendices.

1.3. Structure

The parts of the dissertation work are balanced, its elements are logical and consistent. The purpose and the tasks set determine the logic of the research. In the first chapter, theoretical concepts and emphases in other scholars' studies on employee job satisfaction are presented. Special attention is paid to the scales for measuring satisfaction and the factors influencing it. Results for various countries and industries are presented to substantiate the research methodology which is presented in the second chapter. It also interprets the results of a study of the factors influencing employee satisfaction in the ICT sector. The summaries and conclusions are described in the last part of the dissertation.

1.4. Literature

The bibliographic reference contains 197 literary sources, including 186 in Bulgarian and 11 in English.

1.5. Appendices

They present questionnaires in Bulgarian and in English for conducting the preparatory and actual empirical research.

II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation

2.1. Assessment of the relevance and development of research in the scientific problem of the dissertation.

The researched problem is contemporary, interpreted correctly and according to the goals set by the doctoral student. Job satisfaction is a significant issue in human resources management with, and it is crucial for their retention, better productivity, commitment and loyalty, and indirectly - for the overall improvement of the company's competitiveness. A clear focus is placed on satisfaction research, taking into account the specific characteristics of the ICT sector - high turnover, low loyalty, intensive intellectual work, and high-stress levels. The essence is clarified, and perceptions of the significant factors influencing job satisfaction are presented. This provides a sound basis for developing the author's research model. The PhD student determines the most important factors for employees' job satisfaction in the ICT sector and examines their influence using measures constructed by her. For this purpose, an in-depth study of applicable scales for measuring job satisfaction was conducted, accompanied by targeted analyzes and correct conclusions about their validity and possibilities for use in research in the dissertation object.

2.2. Assessment of the language, volume and instrumentation of the dissertation work

The presentation style is very good, with a clear and understandable statement. Good theoretical awareness is demonstrated, and key concepts are correctly explained. The doctoral student purposefully systematizes various authors' points of view, interprets them in good faith and presents her view of their possible application in the research object. Appropriate scientific research approaches and methods were used, providing good argumentation when testing the research hypotheses. The PhD candidate demonstrates good skills in summarizing and analyzing data and presenting and interpreting it in the context of the topic at hand.

2.3. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract meets the requirements for structure and content; its volume is 42 pages. It accurately presents the dissertation work in a synthesized form, as well as the most important research results, incl. the contributions achieved. It lists six publications related to the subject of the dissertation - 3 articles and 3 reports

III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work

I accept the contributions presented in the abstract. According to my personal judgment, the developed systematic scheme for researching the satisfaction with employees' work in the ICT industry, based on the two author's studies, can be evaluated as the most significant scientific applied contribution. I would also highlight the benefit of the systematization of the tools used and the results of other scholars' research among ICT professionals from 13 countries, as well as identifying a broad list of factors influencing job satisfaction. Of great practical value are the identified most essential factors for satisfaction among employees of the ICT sector and the conclusions drawn about their influence on overall employee satisfaction.

IV. Notes and questions to the PhD student

1. The object of the study and the sample for the empirical study could be presented more precisely. On page 3, it is stated that "the object of research are employees at different levels, with different professions and from all age groups from the ICT industry in Bulgaria and abroad". On page 86, it is clear that employees from 33 countries are covered, but it is not clear how these countries were selected for inclusion in the survey sample.
2. Explain how it is formed, what kind it is, and how the sample's representativeness is ensured for the actual study in the dissertation and distinguish a general population from a research sample. On page 82, it is stated that the preliminary survey was conducted among a "*targeted sample* of about 1,500 individuals" who are part of the PhD student's "broad circle of business contacts", and 30% of them (451 people) responded. For the actual survey, "an additional 500 *selected* employees from the ICT sector" were added, with 755 responding and the total number of respondents being 588 (p. 90). It is clear from the text that the participants in both studies were "selected" – please explain how they were selected.
3. On page 6, it is stated that "a large number of Bulgarian scientists also research the multi-layered nature of job satisfaction", but in the dissertation the views of only three Bulgarian scientists are commented, and in the list of literature 11 sources are in Bulgarian. The dissertation would benefit if the studies of more Bulgarian scientists were covered, by which the characterization of the ICT sector in Bulgaria would be complete and in-depth.
4. When characterizing the ICT companies in Bulgaria (p.10), it is claimed that their management is "rather transformational than transactional". Please elaborate on what you mean.

The notes made in no way detract from the merits of the dissertation work, which impresses with the demonstrated competence on the subject and thoroughness of the studies carried out by the doctoral student. The notes should be interpreted as guidelines for improving her future research work.

V. Summary evaluation of the dissertation work and conclusion

Based on the above, I consider that the evaluated dissertation represents a completed scientific study and meets the relevant legal requirements and internal rules of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The author Irina Janchovska demonstrates skills for independent research work at an excellent theoretical and practical level and abilities to work with appropriate scientific tools. Results of significant scientific applied nature have been obtained.

The above arguments give me the reason to express a positive assessment of the dissertation work and to propose to the members of the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to the doctoral student Irina Yanchovska in professional field 3.7 "Administration and management".

21.08.2022
Varna

Statement prepared by:
(assoc. prof. D. Serafimova, PhD)