

REVIEW

On the Dissertation Work for Acquiring Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor"

Author of the Dissertation: Ivona Hristova Litsova

Title: "Development of a model for evaluating
outcomes of training and learning activities"

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Dr Irina Georgieva

This review is produced in relation with Order № ПД 38-52/26.01.2024 of the Rector of the University of Sofia "Kl. Ohridski".

The proposed dissertation consists of an introduction, two chapters, a conclusion, a list of figures, a list of information sources, and appendices. The main text consists of 136 pages. The sample forms used by the author for the evaluation of a training course, as well as surveys, comparison table, questionnaires are encompassed in seven appendices.

The proposed dissertation work provides a scientific and applied research which centers on the problem of evaluating the results of corporate trainings in business organizations. The author grounds their research interest emphasizing the necessity to propose a model for the evaluation of the outcomes of training and learning activities, which will be of aid to better construct training programs and evaluate their results.

The first chapter of the work carries out theoretical and empirical research in the field of training evaluation. The theoretical part wraps up a wide range of views on the essence of the assessment of the outcomes of learning activities. The aim of the dissertation work is to propose and test a new model for the evaluation of training courses, based on a juxtaposition between existing models and their evaluation. Through comparative analyzes between existing models, the author points out that the gaps in the up-to-date research data which needs to be evaluated is technology. The author claims that although it was added as an influencing factor by Mahapatra and Lai (2005), "technology" is not present in Kirkpatrick's New Model and "it is not given the attention it deserves in terms of its influence on the grasping of the content of the training program" /p.77/. Regarding the grounds for adding the variable "technology" of the research model, I reckon the author could have made a more precise and conceptual elaboration of the scope and nature of the "technology" factor.

The second chapter displays the methodology of the empirical research and the collected quantitative and qualitative data. The subject of the study is the concepts of the training evaluators, managers and specialists at the Human Resources department of big companies in Bulgaria about the construction, implementation and evaluation of trainings.

Three questionnaires were applied to investigate the impact of training outcomes on business and to collect empirical data.

1) The first questionnaire is aimed at evaluators of trainings outside the organization and includes 27 questions.

2) The second questionnaire focuses on employees within the organization (managers, leaders, experts, specialists in the field of Human Resources) and contains 21 questions.

3) The third questionnaire contains 9 questions and is aimed at employees in the organization who are in expert and managerial positions.

4) Qualitative research rested on 20 semi-structured interviews which were conducted with managers and specialists from the Human Resources Department, as well as 6 interviews with representatives of training organizations.

IBM SPSS and MS Excel software was applied for data analysis. The proposed research model that needs to be investigated in the thesis encompasses the following four elements: technology, skills, behavior and outcomes (contributing to business and society). The research should trace and prove the impact of the elements technology, skills and behavior on outcomes. The interaction between the elements of the model was tested by multiple regression. The regression analysis confirms the statistical significance of the derived model, according to which the elements technology, skills and behavior predict the variable "results".

As a recommendation, I reckon the author should elaborate and expand the analysis 1.) in terms of the psychological, motivational and informational mechanisms of the "technology" factor for the effectiveness of training results; 2.) to more comprehensively elucidate the interaction between the effectiveness of the trainings and the benefits for the society as a whole, which is also a notion that is defended in the work. There is no enumeration of the information sources of the work, which is an established research practice. I am of the opinion that the list of figures, which is a technical guideline, should be shifted to the end of the work. Launching the dissertation with an Introduction features the usual structure of a dissertation which is shortcoming of the work.

Four individual publications within the scope of the dissertation were produced. The proposed list of publications is ground for the conclusion that the main part of the dissertation and the results of the research have been shared with the scientific community.

The work is written in a professional language and the obtained results, as well as their interpretation, demonstrate thorough knowledge of the problem of the evaluating of results of corporate training as part of the process of Training and development in business organizations. My judgment of the abstract and the outlined contributions in it is also positive. The scientific and research significance of the dissertation lays in the proposed and verified new model for evaluating training in organizations. The applied significance of the dissertation work is consisted in the formulation of guidelines for practical application of the research results.

In conclusion, the professional and research qualities of the author, demonstrated through the proposed work, give me grounds to vote positively for

awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Ivona Hristova Litsova
in the professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management".

Sofia, 22.03.2024

Member of the Scientific Jury:
(Assoc. prof. Dr Irina Georgieva)